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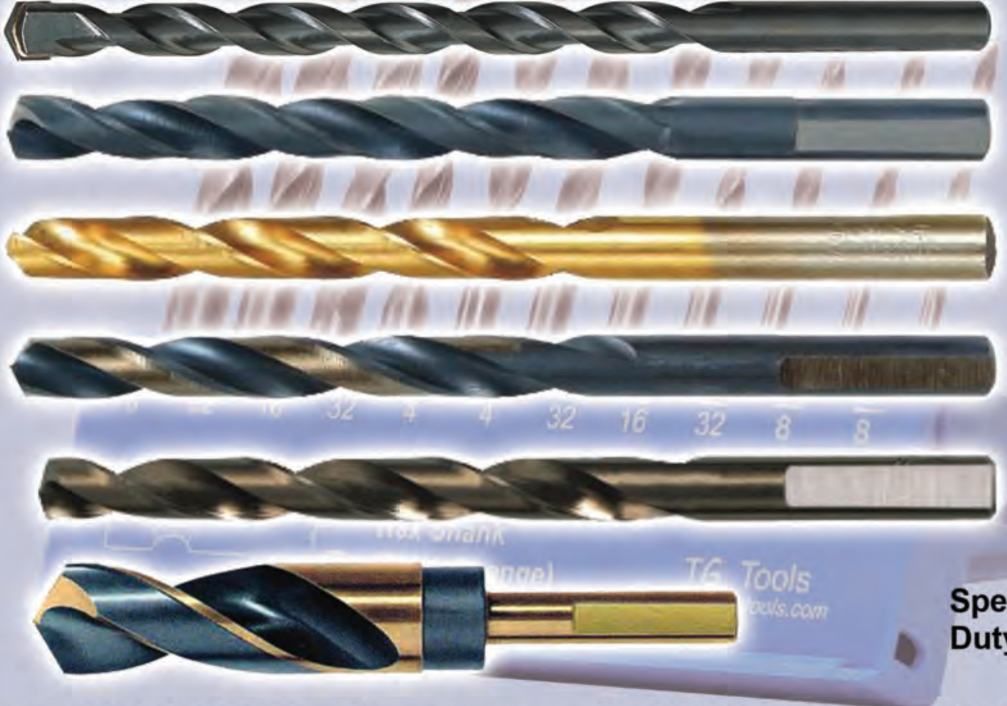

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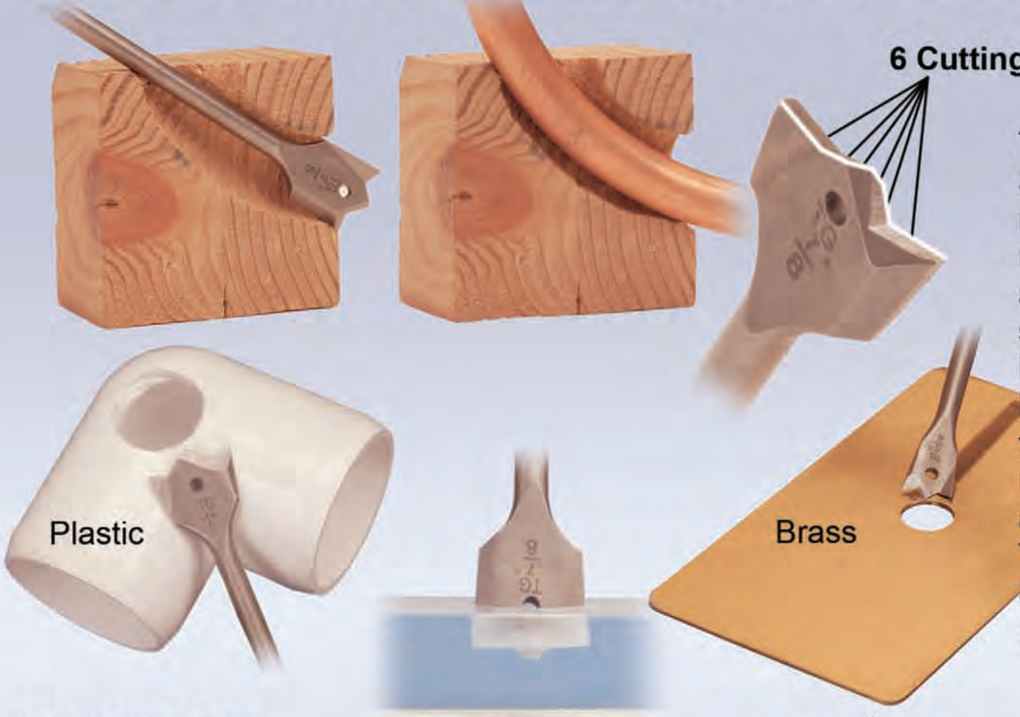

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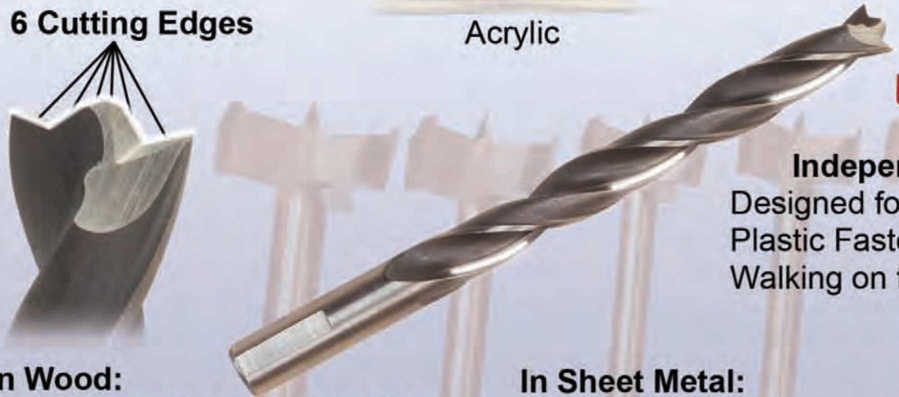

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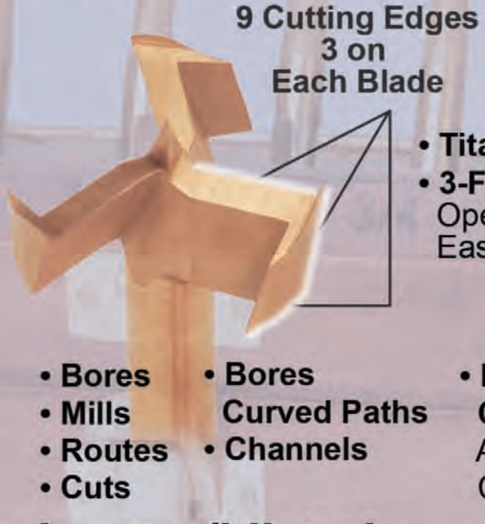

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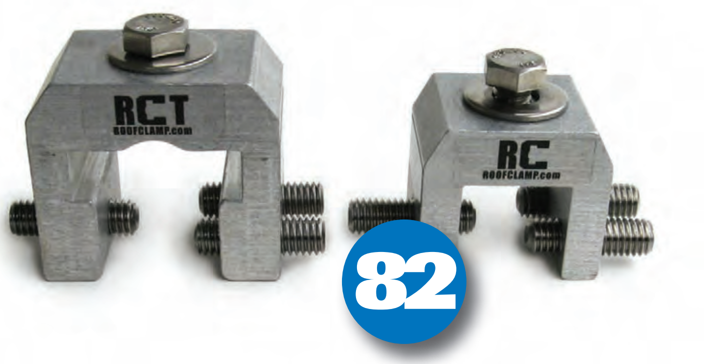

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LETTER From The Editor-In-Chief

Conventional wisdom in the home-improvement industry suggests that one should plan outdoor projects for the summer and indoor projects for the winter. Personally, I'm often working at the mercy of magazine deadlines, not always a schedule of personal preference like many DIY'ers. However, if there's one thing I've learned from working through all seasons, it's that the conventional rule of thumb doesn't always hold true.

As a southerner, when I'm planning my year of upcoming projects I polarize my schedule between fall and winter as best as the magazine will allow. These are the moderate climates where I can squeeze the most productivity out of a day. The height of summer in Alabama is stiflingly hot and humid, making outdoor work not only a suffocating chore but a genuine threat for heat stroke. And, when you are working outdoors, the heat is absolutely draining, and it's simply hard to fire on all cylinders. July and August are not the wisest times to build a deck or fence down south. The long daylight hours are nice, but the most usable of them come early in the morning or near the evening.

During the autumn, I find it easier to tackle the obligatory lawn chores or sweaty backyard building with football on the radio, while planning my indoor projects for the winter.

Even down south it can get frigid in the winter. We've got nothing on our northern neighbors as far as low temps for lengthy periods, but it occasionally gets cold enough to snow and numb your fingers, which are pretty key to physical labor of any sort. Whereas I do spend the heart of winter on warmer indoor projects, I plan my outdoor work for late winter and the milder spring season—not summer. The trick is to avoid the extremes, and that changes dramatically from place to place in this big country of ours.

"It's not rocket surgery," as one of our esteemed politicians recently quipped, but it makes a lot of sense to plan ahead according to the weather in your particular geographic area, with those outdoor jobs scheduled when the elements are kindest, no matter what season that may be.

As we approach winter, this issue of *EHT* offers a couple of neat indoor projects to consider; how to build a hope chest (an excellent gift idea), and how to cut and join your own picture frames, a skill everyone can use.

Stay warm,

Extreme How-To

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The Mortise & Tenon Joint has been used for thousands of years. But not until now did someone figure out a way to provide a quick and easy, all-in-one solution to cut both a matching mortise and tenon with a single inexpensive jig. The General E•Z *Pro* Mortise & Tenon Jig is the answer! The jig comes completely assembled and is ready to use right out-of-the-box to produce the widely used 1/4" mortise and tenon joint. An optional kit is available for producing 3/8" and 1/2" joints. Using a plunge router with the jig, woodworkers can quickly and easily cut both mortises and tenons ranging from 1/4" to 1/2" thick and from 1" to 3" wide. The unit can easily handle stock ranging from 1/2" to 1-1/2" thick and can cut multiple mortises in a single long piece.

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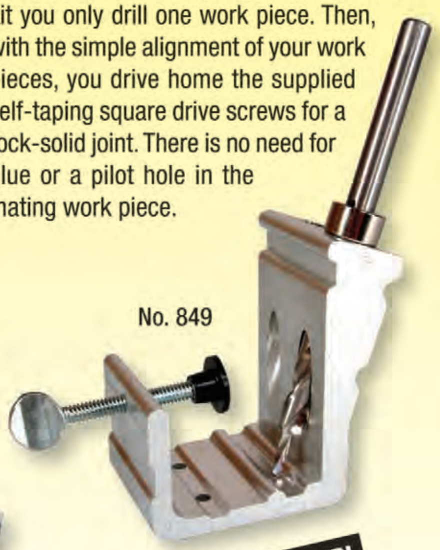

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No. 841

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Q&A Got a ?

Questions About Home Building, Remodeling? Have Your Own How-To Tip? Visit our blog at ***blog.extremehowto.com*** *and click on Ask Our Experts.*

Q: *I've picked up a couple of furniture pieces at yard sales. Their finish is intact, but pretty dull at this point. Is there a way to revitalize a dull wood finish without completely refinishing the wood?*

A: To breathe a little life into an old dirty or dull wood finish, try a simple cleaning followed by a coat of wax. First, wipe down the item with a cloth dampened with naphtha to remove any oil-soluble residue. To remove water-soluble grime, clean the finish with a mixture of warm water and dish detergent. Use only a damp—not soaking—cloth, so as not to cause water damage to the wood. Wipe away excess water from the finished surface. Next, lightly sand the surface with P400-grit sandpaper, followed by P600. Do not sand all the way through the wood—the idea is to scuff up the top layer of finish for better adhesion of the wax. Use a cloth dampened with naphtha to remove any sanding dust (using water may raise the wood grain). Then, to restore the luster of the finish, apply a wax paste in your choice of color tone according to the manufacturer's instructions.

……

Q: *Can I remove popcorn ceiling with water after it's been painted?*

A: The fact that the popcorn finish has been painted means that it was probably primed with an oil-based primer. If it had been coated with a water-based primer or paint, the water would have likely melted away the texture during the painting procedure. The oil-based coating means the texture won't be susceptible to melting from an application of water, as is usually the case with popcorn removal projects. A professional may use a chemical stripper. An easier, cleaner DIY approach to changing the look for the painted textured ceiling may be to cover it with thin drywall or decorative ceiling tiles.

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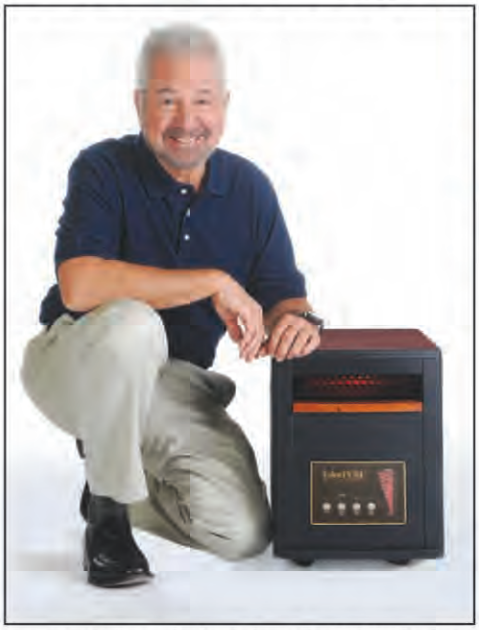

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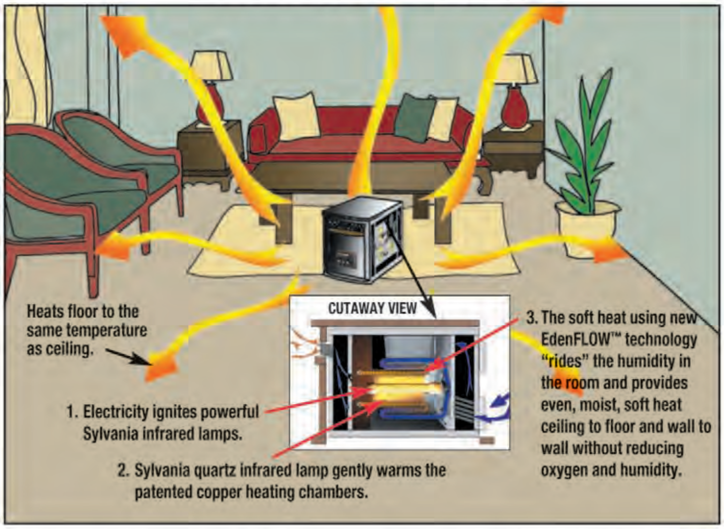
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Bob Vila, America's Favorite Home Improvement Expert,
Canton, Ohio

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For over 30 years as your home improvement television host, I have reviewed and experienced thousands of products. I have an EdenPURE® in my Massachusetts home and found it to be a very safe and reliable source of portable heat. This is one of those few comfort investments I can recommend for your home that will truly pay dividends.

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The EdenPURE® can also help you feel better. Unlike EdenPURE® imitators, it will not reduce humidity or oxygen in the room. These imitators use ceramic plates instead of our patented copper. The EdenPURE® GEN4 has over 1 pound of copper! Cheap ceramic plates reduce humidity, dry out your sinuses and make your skin dry. With other heating sources, you'll notice that you get sleepy when the heat comes on because they are burning up oxygen.

The advanced space-age EdenPURE® GEN4 also heats the room evenly, wall to wall and floor to ceiling. Other heating sources heat rooms unevenly with most of the heat concentrated high and to the center of the room. And as you know, portable heaters only heat an area a few feet around the heater. With the EdenPURE®, the temperature will not vary in any part of the room.

Photos using infrared lighting demonstrated that the heat was almost perfectly even from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. The EdenPURE® advanced infrared efficiency is based on the distribution of energized air, not on just fan movement. This heat is called "soft heat" due to how comfortable it is.

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The EdenPURE® carries a 60-day unconditional, no-risk guarantee. If you are not totally satisfied, return it at our expense and your purchase price will be refunded. No questions asked. There is also a 5-year warranty on all parts and labor for the GEN4 and a 3-year warranty for the Personal Heater.

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Q&A Got a ?

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Q. *My water bill has been on steady incline the last few months. The water department says I must have a leaky toilet or faucet, but I don't see any signs of either. Is there a way to test for unseen leaks?*

A. A leaking faucet should be visibly evident, but toilets can have "silent" leaks. A dye test is a tried-and-true method for testing that plumbers have used for many years. To test, remove the tank lid and any colored cleaners that may be in the tank. Flush until the tank fills with clear water. You'll need a dye capsule or some food coloring—even powdered Kool-aid will work. Apply enough dye to the tank to give the water a deep color tone. Leave the toilet unused and check the water in the bowl after 30 minutes to an hour. If dyed water is in the bowl, you have a leak. The next step is to determine if the leak is coming from the flush valve or fill valve. Make a pencil mark at the full water line inside the tank wall. Turn off the water supply and wait about a half hour. If the water stays at the level of the pencil mark, then the leak is at the fill valve. If the water level has fallen, the leak is occurring in the flush valve.

……

Q. *I'd like to seal up a couple of cracks in the driveway. Should I use an exterior-grade caulk, like a silicone?*

A. A lot depends on the size of the crack. Whereas some silicone-based caulks will work for small cracks, the problem is that it doesn't level out; it retains its bead shape, which may not cover large cracks. First, sweep away any debris from the crack. Compressed air also works well to clean concrete cracks. For large cracks, try an acrylic emulsified liquid product. These thick liquids have self-leveling properties, so when you pour it into the crack, it spreads out to work its way into the nooks and crannies of the concrete, sealing it with a tight bond that bridges the entire crack. Simply wipe away the excess with a damp towel. **EHT**

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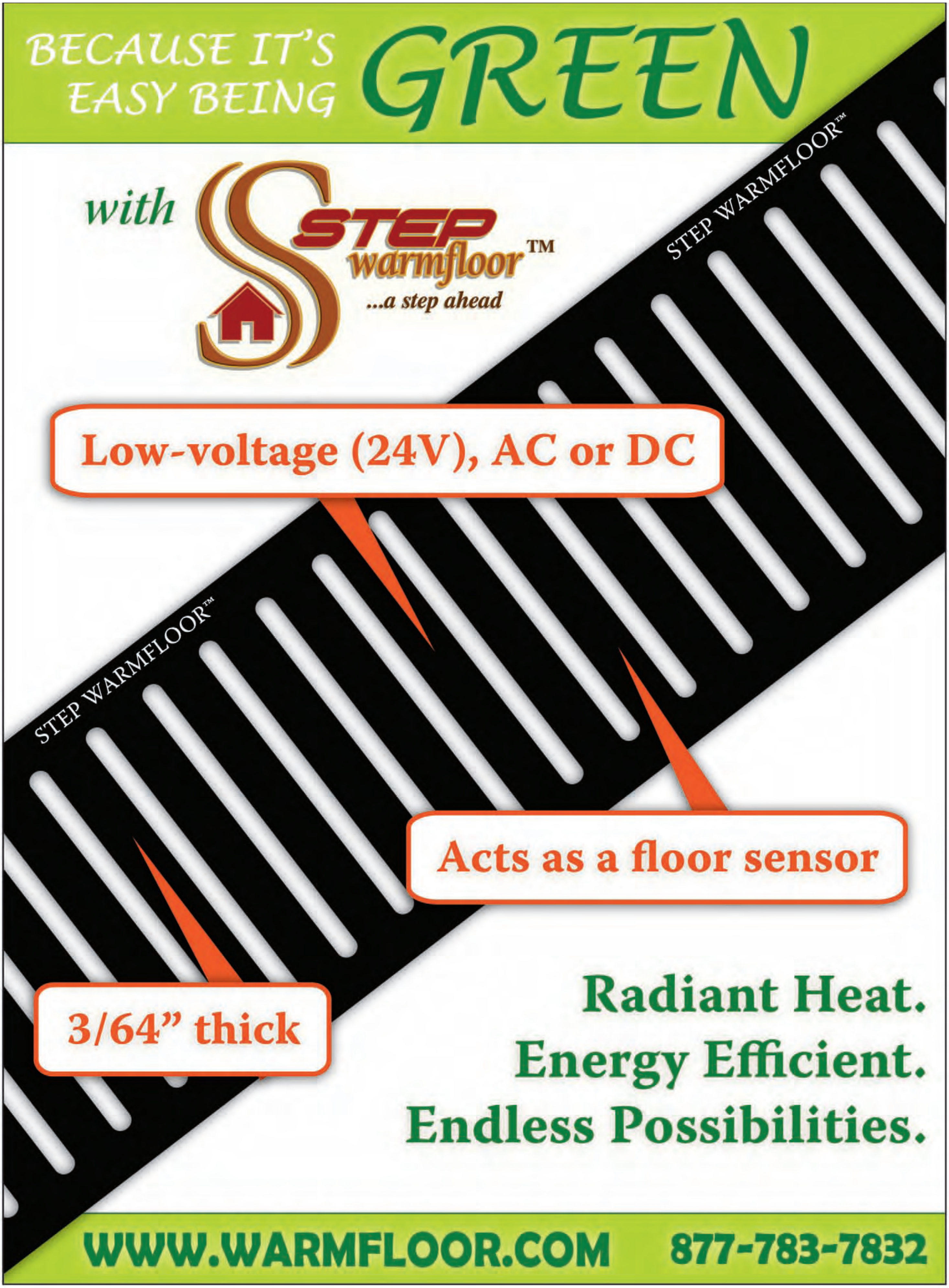

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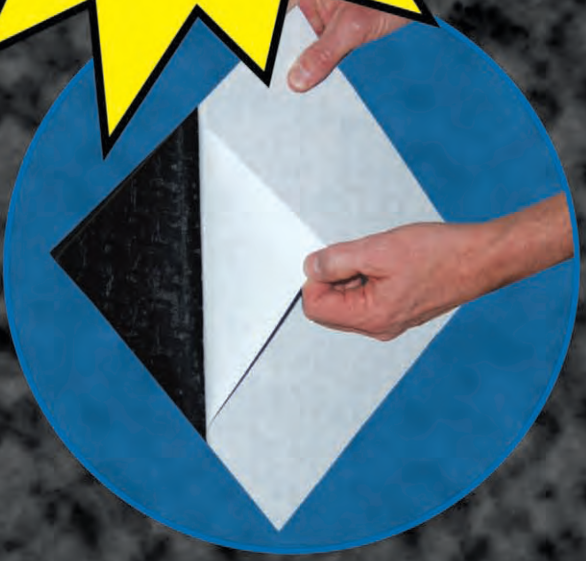

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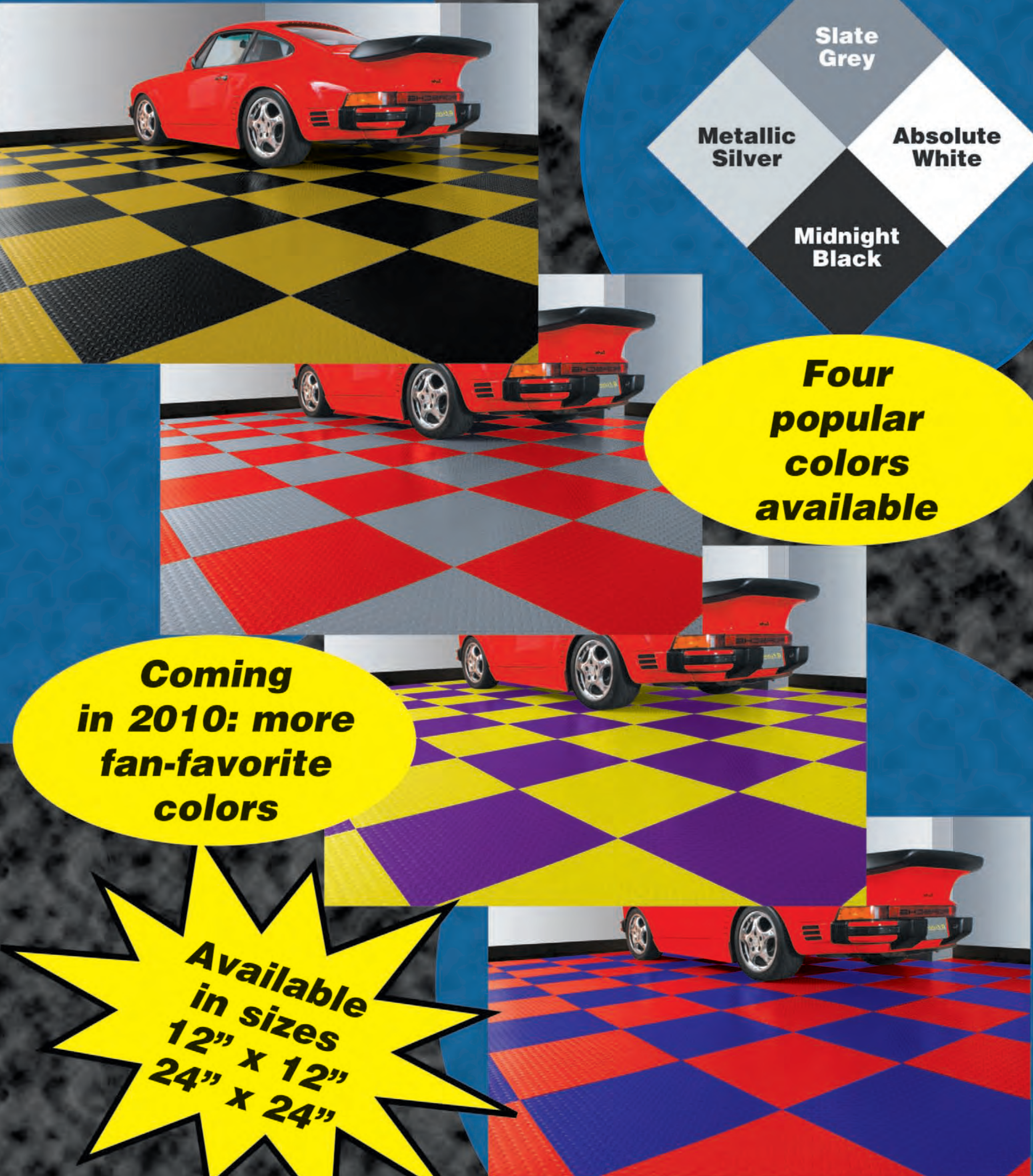

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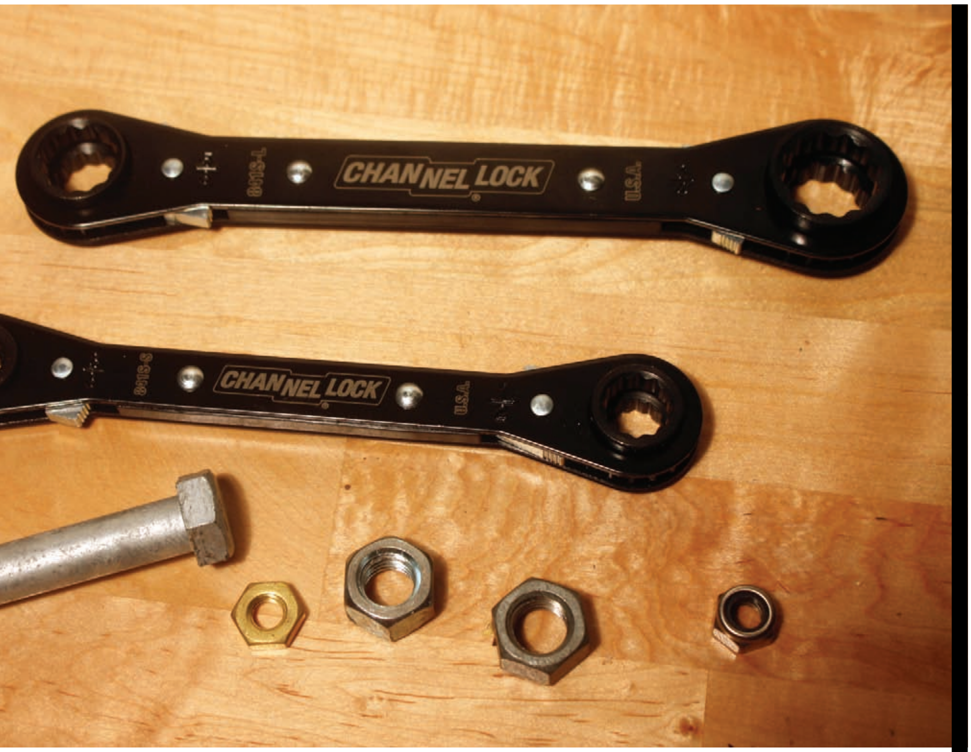
Holding Power

New Innovations in Pliers and Wrenches



By Matt Weber

Power tools are nice, but even in these days of high-tech innovation, I doubt they'll ever fully replace the basics, like pliers and wrenches. From plumbing and furniture assembly to electrical and automotive work, every DIY'er needs a trusty collection of hand tools. When gearing up for your next tool purchase, consider these new advancements in design for tools that bite and twist.

NEW DESIGN FOR RATCHETING WRENCHES

Although ratcheting wrenches can no longer be considered "new," Channellock, Inc. has recently launched an innovative spin on what has become a hot product for handy homeowners. Whereas many ratcheting wrenches operate by tightening the nut or bolt in one direction, and then flipping the tool over to loosen the fastener, Channellock offers a different approach. Made in the USA, the company's new 4-in-1 Ratcheting Wrench Set includes two wrenches with four different sizes built into each—meaning eight settings in two tools. This is accomplished through a small trigger at the end of each wrench head that reverses the ratcheting motion. Since there's no need to flip over the tool to reverse the ratcheting direction, the other side of the tool can be manufactured to fit a different size fastener.

The new two-piece set does the work of eight combo wrenches or sockets, from 5/16 to 3/4 inch, and more sizes will be introduced in the future. Like all Channellock's pliers, the wrenches are heat-treated for excellent durability and have an electronic coating to help prevent rust. The set is also available in metric measurements.

A trigger on the Channellock wrenches reverses the ratcheting direction.

NAIL JACK NAIL EXTRACTORS

Pulling nails is a dull and aggravating but often necessary chore in home improvement. The design of the Nail Jack pliers provides the needed leverage and gripping power for making the task easier, and even offers the ability to dig a nail out of the wood. The digging action is aided by the thin cutting blades that slip beneath the nail heads. Furthermore, the 11-inch model features the patent-pending "Hammer Tap"—a flat area behind the cutters that allow you to use a hammer to drive the points of the Nail Jack into the wood for easier extraction. The Nail Jack nail puller even pulls brads from the back of material with little effort. Unlike

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the claw of a hammer or cat's paw, the scissoring action of the Nail Jack can grab fasteners with small heads such as finish nails and brads. This saves time, as well as usable lumber.

Currently, four models are available. The 11-inch model includes the handy "Hammer Tap" feature. The new, larger, drop-forged Nail Jack Pro is designed to withstand the daily abuse of a construction site. The 8-1/2-inch Nail Hunter is compact in size and great for extracting brads and staples. Newest to the lineup is the Staple Jack, designed for simple removal of staples, but also works well as a craft tool for jewelry making and similar applications.

VOLTAGE-SENSING WIRE STRIPPERS

Gardner Bender's new GST-55M Circuit Alert Voltage-Sensing Wire Strippers offers the convenience of two tools in one. The tool can strip and loop cable, crimp terminals and even cut and rethread small bolts. The GST-55M features stainless steel nick-resistant blades and a knurled nose at the end of the jaws for extra grip. The jaws also have two holes to function as wire-looping "stations," and the handle has a comfortable dual-grip position.

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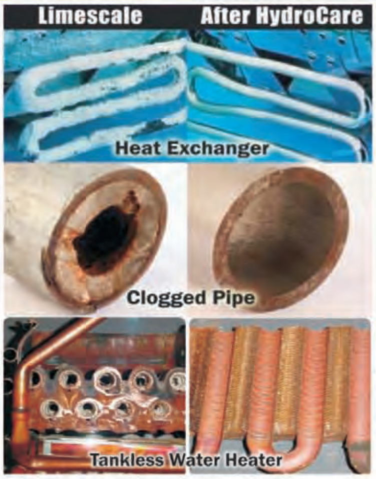

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2. Tankless water heaters operating in hard water failed after 19 days of testing
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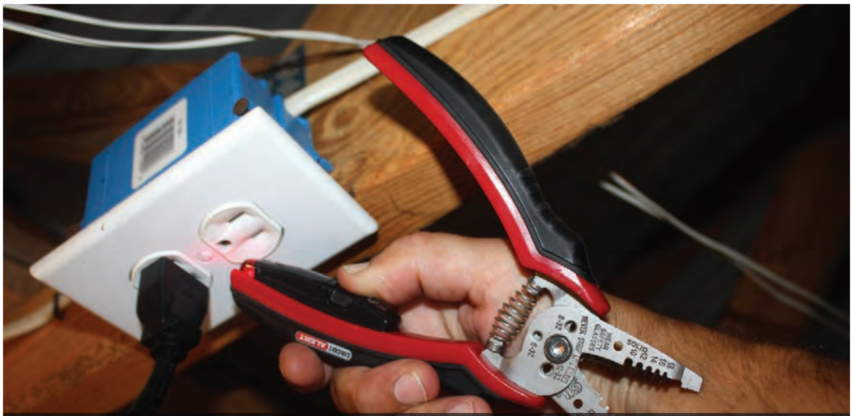
What is unique about this tool is its ability to positively detect live voltage without ever having to physically come in contact with outlets or wires. The interchangeable Circuit Alert Sensor is integrated into the handle of the tool. The sensor produces an audible beep and visible red flash to alert the instant that voltage is detected. Just snap it in place, and you're ready to work around electrical installations more safely. In addition to three sizes of wire strippers, Gardner Bender also offers the Circuit Alert sensor in pliers, screwdrivers, flashlights and utility knives.



Gardner Bender's Circuit Alert sensor can positively detect live voltage without ever coming in contact with outlets or wires.

LARGE CAPACITY COMPACT WRENCH

In recent years Channellock has introduced its Code Blue line of adjustable wrenches that include some pretty handy features, including measurement scales that line the jaws, which are handy for sizing pipe diameter, nuts and bolts. The Code Blue lineup earns its name from the light blue rubberized grips that provide each tool handle plenty of comfort for regular usage. Each of the six wrenches in the product line is built with the highest quality, but one of

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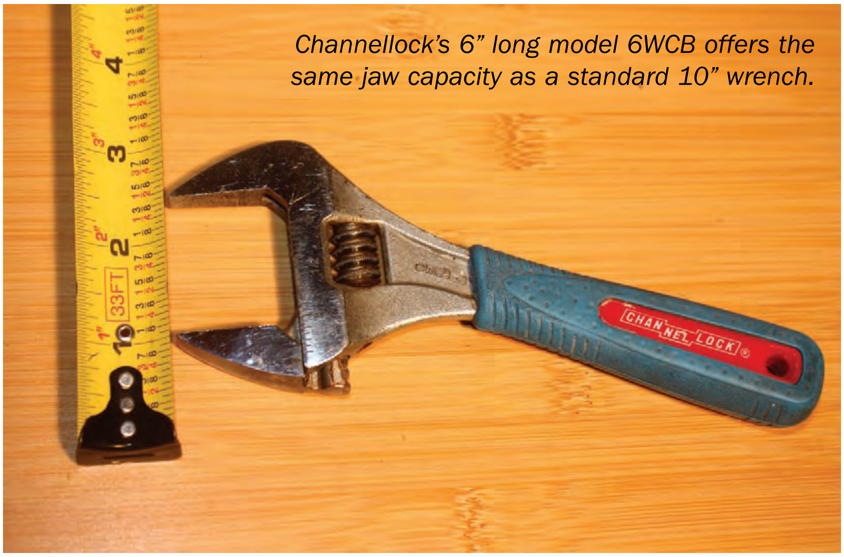

Channellock's 6" long model 6WCB offers the same jaw capacity as a standard 10" wrench.

my favorites is the 6WCB model. At only 6 inches long, it offers the same jaw capacity as a 10-inch wrench (1.34 inches). Whereas this might sacrifice a little leverage, the shorter handle gets into cramped spaces much easier than a longer wrench but can tackle the same large diameters.

EXPANDING LINE OF GROOVELOCK PLIERS

"Groovy." I've always liked that word, even if it fell out of fashion decades ago. Still, for a variety of reasons it applies perfectly to Irwin Tools' line of GrooveLock pliers. As an alternative to traditional slip-joint pliers, Irwin's GrooveLock variety uses a simple press-and-slide button to unlock and adjust the lower jaw, which is faster than disengaging, sliding and then reengaging the channels of standard slip-joint pliers. Furthermore, the multi-groove ratcheting system has twice the groove positions as standard slip-joints, affording a more precise grip to a wide variety of work surfaces.

Irwin's flagship model in the GrooveLock features V-shaped

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jaws and right-angle teeth for an excellent bite. Recently, the company has expanded its line to include straight jaws, as well as straight, toothless jaws for work in a wide range of applications. Each set of pliers features a comfortable rubber grip and is backed by a lifetime guarantee.

THE GADGET MULTI-TOOL

The new 11-in-1 Multi-tool from Arnold is dubbed The Gadget, designed to help everyone from homeowners to landscape professionals perform on-the-fly power equipment maintenance. Configured like a folding knife—specifically a Swiss Army Knife, given all the different tools—the Gadget provides several tools in one to eliminate large investments in multiple tools. As a wrench, the Gadget includes the four socket sizes most commonly used in lawn equipment, including 1/2, 5/8, 3/4 and 13/16 inch. Additionally, it contains a large Phillips screwdriver, small and large standard screwdrivers, a T27 Torx driver, a tapered spark-plug gap gauge, a chainsaw file holder and even a bottle opener.

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REDESIGNED LINEMEN'S PLIERS

Channellock has recreated its original linemen's plier by positioning the rivet closer to the head, which provides more power to the laser heat-treated edges for applications such as cutting through fish tape with less effort. The improved 9-1/2-inch 369 high-leverage linemen's plier also has a better balance in the hand, and requires only 87 pounds per square inch (psi) of pressure to cut through 252,000 psi tensile strength fish tape, which is a drastic decrease in force when compared to the competition, according to IMR Test Labs, an independent testing agency. It features drop-forged, high-carbon C1080 steel and the signature Channellock Blue comfort grips.

FAST RELEASE VISE GRIPS

Irwin Tools is the proud owner of the Vise-Grip brand name that's been associated with locking pliers since 1924. When you need a grip that won't let go, you need some Vise-Grips, and over the years Irwin has introduced several technological advancements to this traditional tool. The

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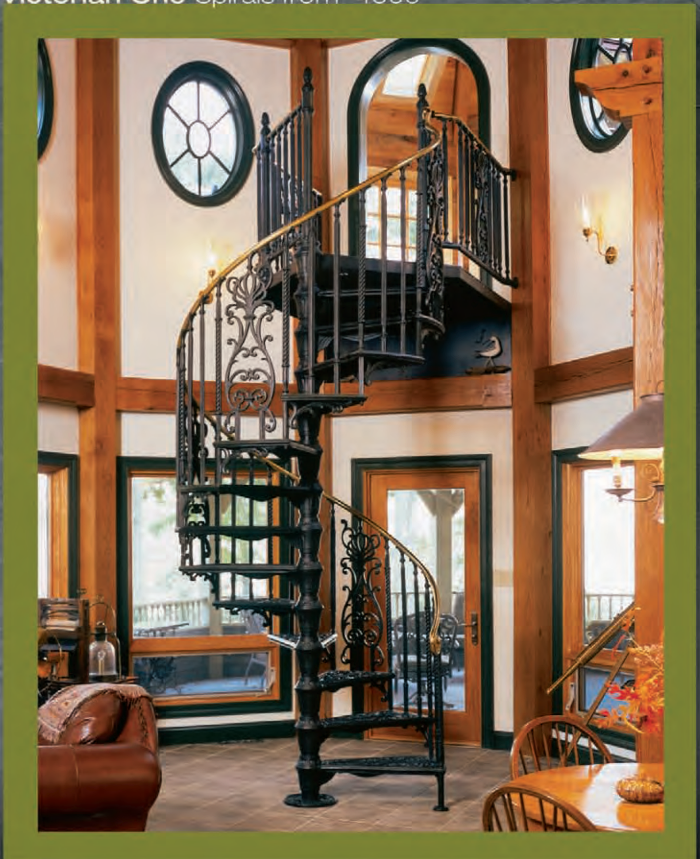

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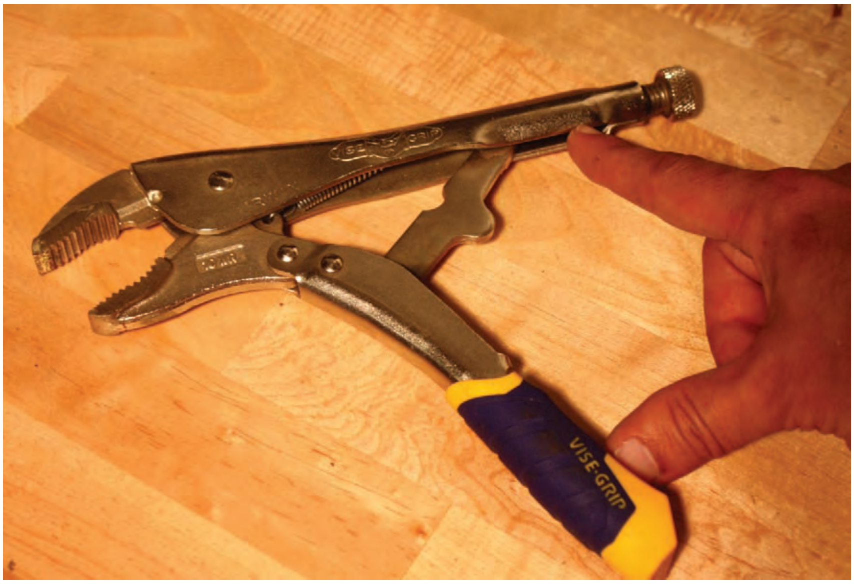
Vise-Grip Fast Release locking pliers feature a one-handed, triggerless release, so they open easily with the flick of a finger. The Fast Release version also features non-slip comfort grips and a patented curved jaw for any job that requires maximum torque. The pivoting "self-energized" lower jaw aligns on the work piece without slipping and grips tighter as more torque is applied to the tool. It also features a hex-key adjustment screw to gradually draw material together, or to provide a slow and controlled release. Currently five tools round out the Fast Release Vise-Grip lineup, including long-nose pliers and C-Clamps. **EHT**



TOOL RESOURCES

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Channellock, www.channellock.com
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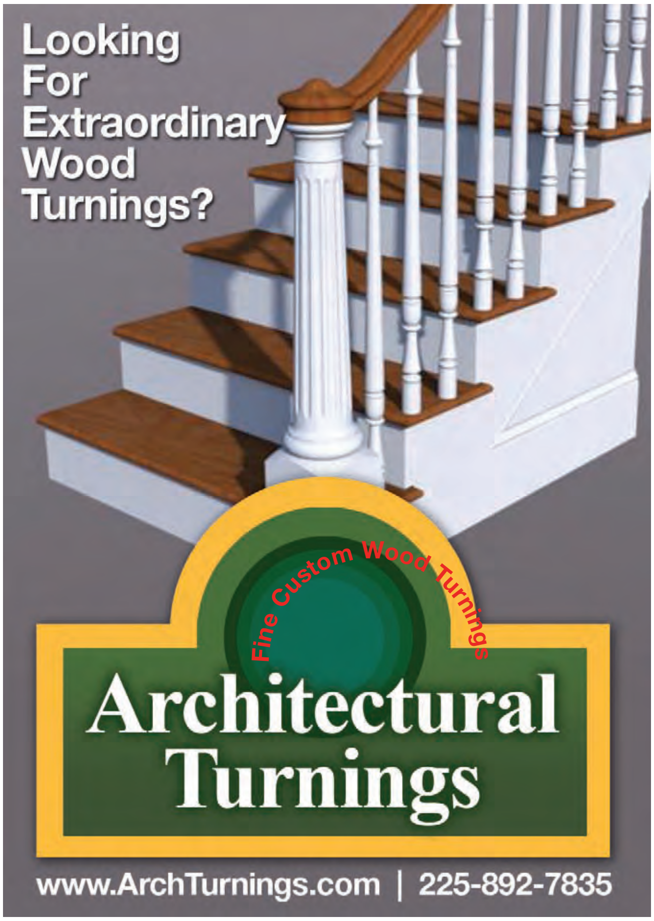
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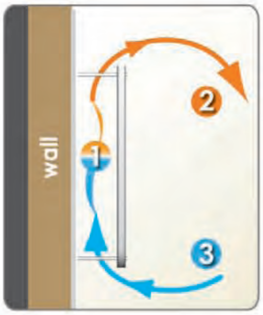

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HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Monte Burch

Last Christmas, Kelsy, my then 14-year old granddaughter, asked if I would build her a hope chest. Hope chests are also called blanket chests because they were often used to store quilts and other valuable collectible items. Since grandfathers are owned by their granddaughters, I said yes.

I decided to build the chest from walnut grown, harvested, cured and milled on our farm. The wood had been curing for about four years in my barn and was ready to be used. Other wood choices would be oak, cherry, pecan, red cedar or even white pine. You might consider making the chest from plywood to cut the cost and make construction easier. This would eliminate gluing up the solid stock. It would also cut down on the weight somewhat, as well as possible warping problems. I had to glue up the top twice, due to a "twisted" board.

FIRST STEPS

The first step in constructing the chest shown was to surface plane all the stock to the correct thickness. Then, joint one edge and saw the stock to the widths needed. When using this type of "salvaged" walnut lumber there

See construction diagrams, p. 39.

CHEST

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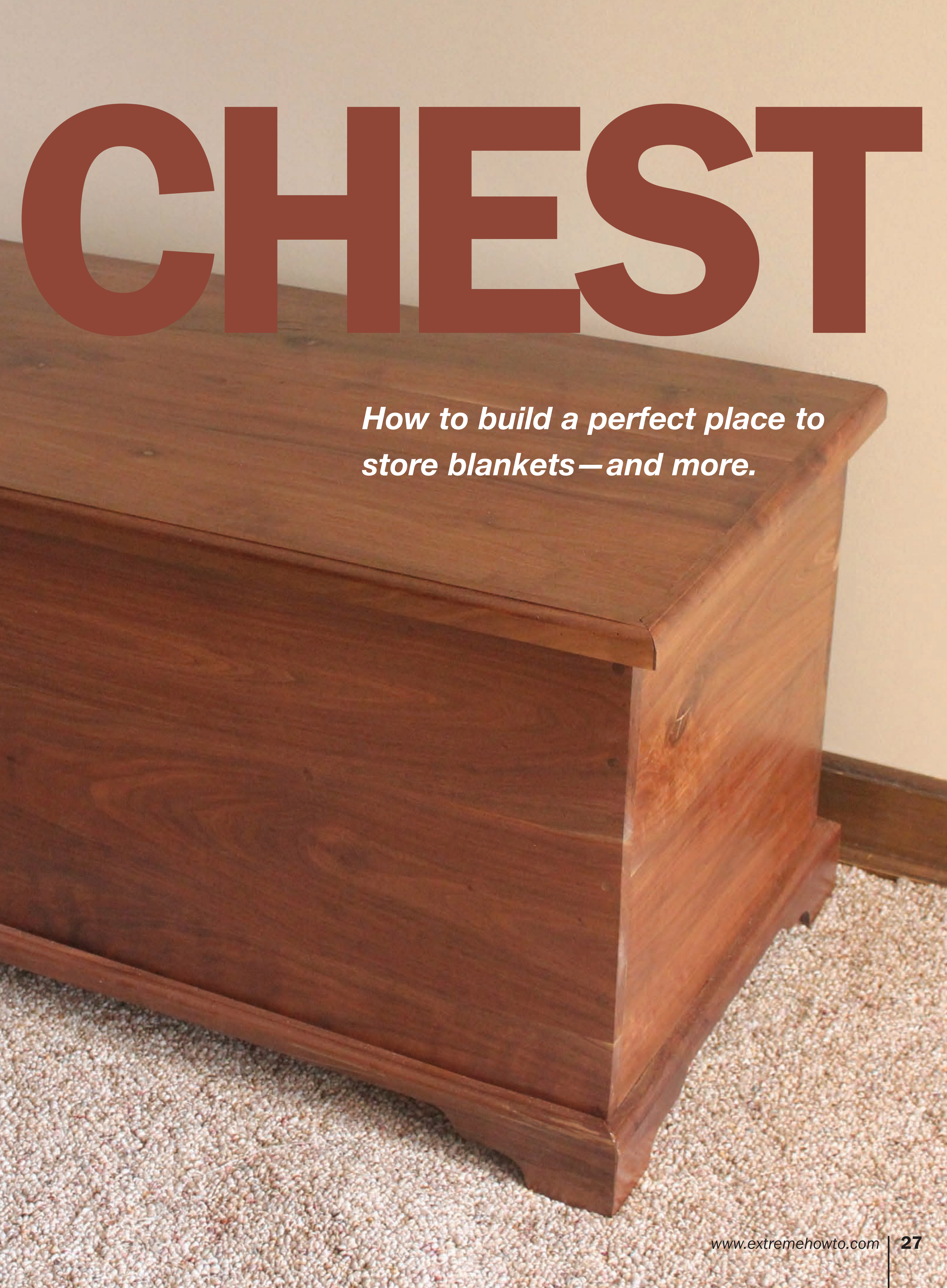

will be waste, including the outside sapwood. Once all stock has been sawn, joint all the edges smooth.

The narrower pieces can be joined to create the wider stock using either dowels with a doweling jig, such as the EZ Pro Doweling Jig Kit from General, or with wooden biscuits and a biscuit cutter. The wide stock shown was assembled with wood biscuits and a biscuit cutter. First, lay the pieces for a side or top on a smooth, flat surface and butt the edges together. Make sure the edges align properly and fit snug. Rejoint any edges that have bumps, waves or rough spots.

Mark one end of each board with a letter. This helps identify boards and the gluing sequence. Mark across the edge of two boards with the marks spaced

First step is to plane and joint the rough-cut planks.

The wide pieces needed for construction are joined using wood biscuits.

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Lay out the pieces and mark across their faces for the biscuit locations.

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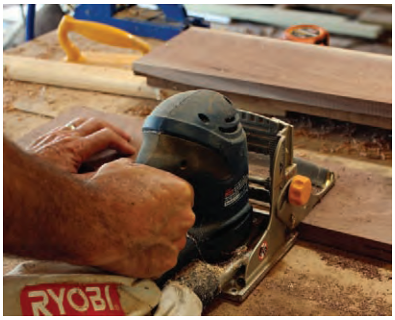
about 6 inches apart. This same sequence can be used whether doweling or biscuit joining.

If biscuit joining, lay one board out flat and set the biscuit cutter depth to half the thickness of the board. Press the biscuit cutter against the edge of the board aligning the center mark on the cutter with the mark on the board, turn on the cutter and push the blade into the stock. Repeat for the other marks. Then, cut the adjoining boards in the same manner. Using a thin screwdriver blade, clean all the wood chips from the biscuit holes.

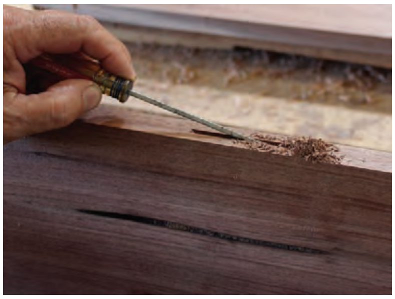
GLUING UP

Clear off a flat, smooth work surface and cover with newspaper. Lay bar clamps in place—you'll need at least four, and more is better. Stand one board for the front assembly on edge and using good quality wood glue, run a glue line across the edge and into the biscuit slots. Insert the biscuits, turn the adjoining board upright and place glue in the biscuit slots. Position the two boards with the biscuits aligning in both slots and tap together with a rubber hammer. Repeat for the remaining boards. Make sure all boards are flat on the bar clamps and tighten the clamps alternatively until all seams are tight and glue is squeezed out. Leave in the clamps overnight. Repeat the steps for the other pieces.

Regardless of how careful you are in joining the boards, there will be some slight differences in



Cut the biscuit slots using a biscuit cutter. Clean the slots with a small screwdriver.



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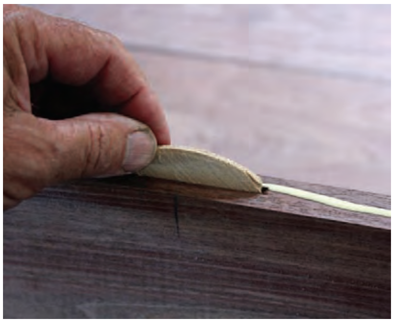

Place glue on the adjoining edges and in the biscuit slots. Clamp the pieces together overnight.

A hand plane can smooth the wood surface. Or, a belt sander can be used.

the edge joints. Use a hand plane or a belt sander with a coarse belt to even all surfaces on the back and front of the glued-up sections. Follow with a fine grit belt sander, then an orbital sander with a medium grit, and finally with a pad sander with a fine grit. As you can see, using hardwood-faced plywood is much easier and faster, but you would need to glue solid strips to the exposed ends or miter the corner joints.

CASE ASSEMBLY

The case was assembled with glue and screws covered with hardwood plugs. I used this method because it's extremely strong, easy, and also provides some decorative appeal. The screw holes will have to be

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The case is assembled using screws covered with matching wood plugs.

Using a forstner bit, bore holes for the wood plugs.

drilled, and also holes for the plugs formed. If you have a countersink bit set you can do this operation in one step. If not, you can use a forstner bit to bore the plug holes 1/4-inch deep. Then, use a 1/8-inch drill bit to drill for the screws. Make sure the plug-hole bit drills a hole to match the plug cutter.

Before assembling, cut the glued-up sections to proper width and length. The end cuts can be done using a miter gauge on a table saw. Run a glue line on both edges of one end and position the front and back in place. Use bar clamps to fasten the assembly together, and you may need help for this step. When you're sure the assembly is aligned properly, install the screws. Use a top quality screw.

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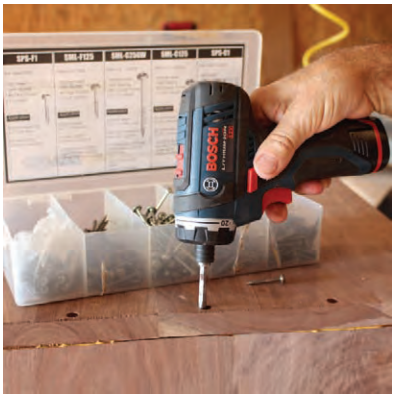
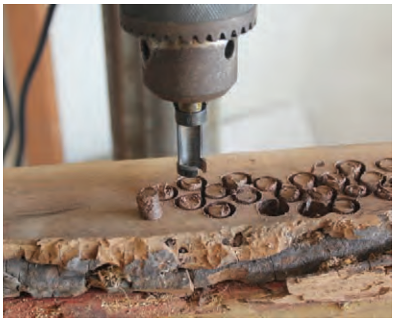
I used Kreg self-tapping Pocket Hole screws, 1-1/4-inch fine thread with a deep No. 2 square-drive recess. Before installing the screws, predrill into the edges of the end board as well. Make sure the case is assembled square.

Cut the plugs using a plug cutter installed in a drill press. Pop out the plugs, place a bit of glue on their ends and tap with a rubber mallet into the holes to cover the screws. Allow the glue to set overnight, then use a belt sander to sand the plugs flush with the wood surface. Fill any holes with good quality wood putty followed with a finish sander.



Place glue on the pieces and clamp together. Then drill with a 1/8" bit for the screws. Using good quality screws, fasten the chest case together.



Cut the plugs using a plug cutter in a drill press. Install the plugs with glue.

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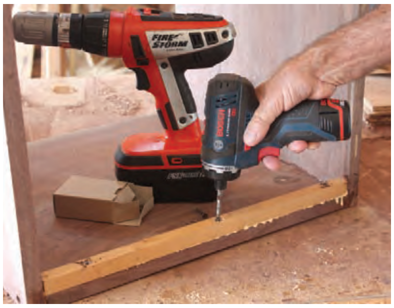
Rip 3/4-by-3/4-inch bottom support strips and fasten them in place on the inside of the bottom using glue and screws. These do not have to be countersunk. Apply the desired finish to the inside of the case and then cut and install the bottom. This can be 3/4-inch plywood, or solid stock. If the latter is used, install crosswise of the case. Fasten in place with glue and screws driven up from the underside of the bottom support strips. To further strengthen the case, cut 3/4-by-3/4-inch corner blocks and glue and screw them in place. These screws should be countersunk to prevent their edges from catching on items.



Install the bottom support blocks.

MAKING THE APRON

Rip the pieces to the correct width for the apron/feet, cutting them somewhat long. Their top edges are routed using a 3/8-inch beading router bit. This is done easiest on a router table, but you can also use a handheld router. Simply clamp the stock to a solid surface, rout one end, then reclamp and finish routing. Make sure you stop and start carefully so there is no marring. Measure the ends of the case and cut the ends of the end aprons to length using a 45-degree cut. Temporarily clamp the ends in place, then match/measure and cut the front and back apron pieces,

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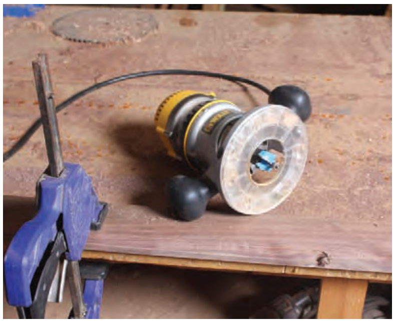
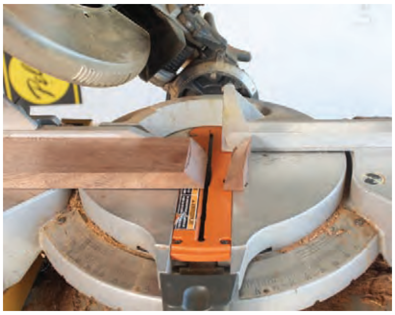
making sure they all meet smoothly and the joints are tight.

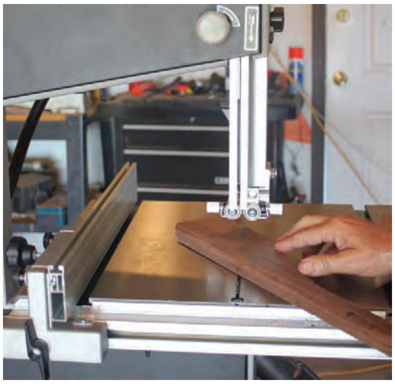
Lay out the pattern for the bottom apron/feet, following the squared drawing (p. 39). It's a good idea to make a wooden pattern for the end cuts from 1/4-inch plywood. You can keep this for future use, because you'll probably get requests to build more of these "family heirlooms." Cut the pieces to shape. You can clamp the ends to a workbench or table top and cut with a jig saw, but a bandsaw makes the work much easier and more precise. Sand the contour cuts. A bench-top drum sander makes this chore easiest, but you can also clamp the pieces in a vise and use a drill-mounted drum sander.

Place glue on one end piece and clamp in place. Fasten in

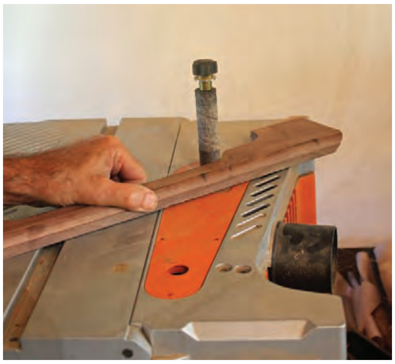


Cut the apron pieces to width. Rout their top edges with a router. Cut the ends of the apron pieces to create 45-degree miter joints.





Cut the apron to shape using a bandsaw. A spindle sander makes easy work of sanding the inside curves of the aprons.



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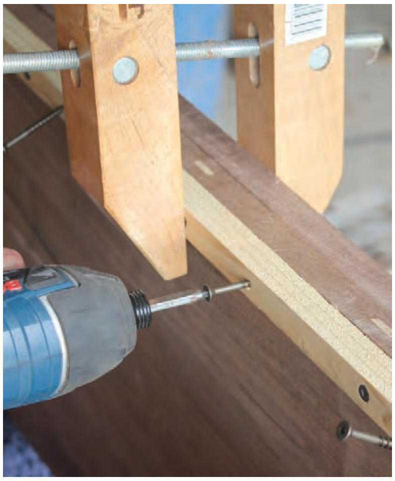
LIFT-OUT TRAY OPTION

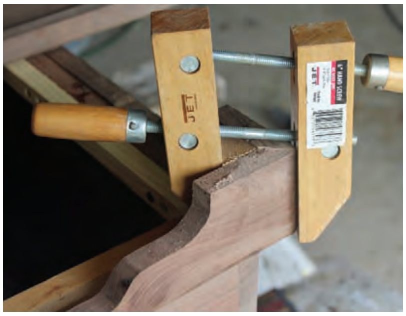
The chest shown also features a matching lift-out tray to hold smaller valuables. The tray slides on 3/4-inch supports placed around the inside of the chest. The tray is made from 1/2-inch stock, but 3/4-inch plywood will also work for the bottom. The tray is also assembled with wood screws, glue and plugs.



Fasten the aprons in place with glue and wood screws. Cut the bottom and fasten it in place with hardwood cleats.

Cut corner blocks and fasten in place.

place with screws driven from the inside of the bottom case into the aprons. Install the opposite end piece in the same manner and then install the front and back aprons. Make sure all joints are tight and smooth. Cut corner blocks for the feet and install with screws and glue. Finish-sand and smooth the entire case, then apply the desired finish. Polyurethane brush-on satin varnish was used with this case, four coats, using extremely fine steel wool between coats.



Cut corner blocks for the feet and install in the same manner.

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Cut the glued-up top to the correct size.

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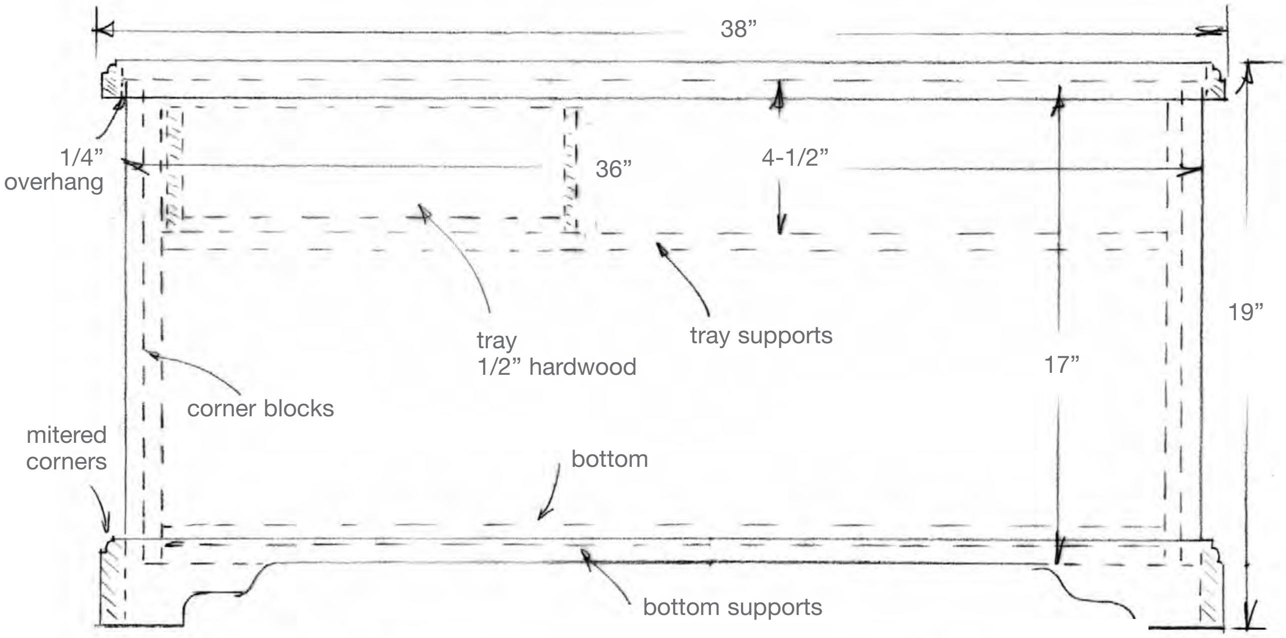
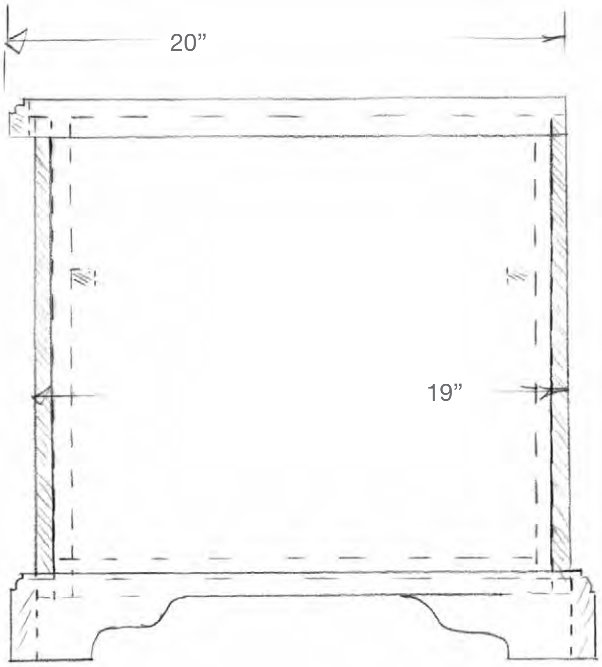
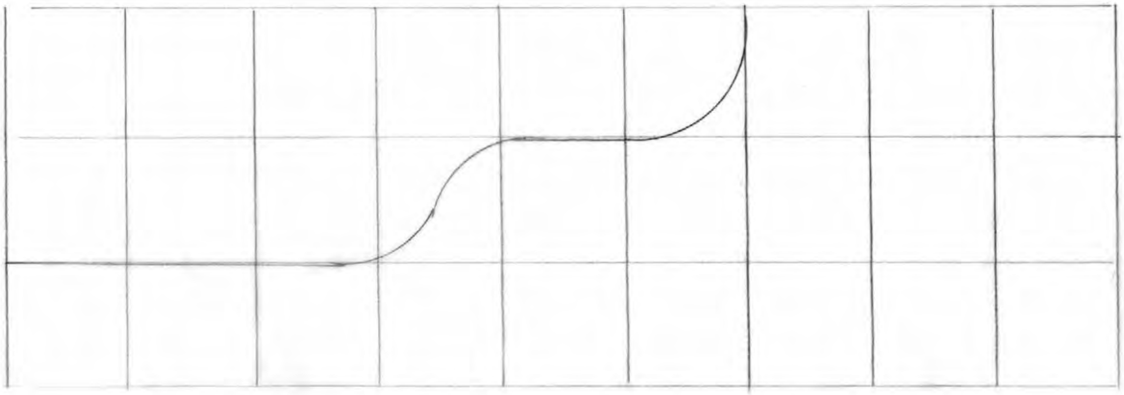

38”
1/4”
overhang
36”
4-1/2”
19”
tray
1/2” hardwood
tray supports
17”
corner blocks
mitered
corners
bottom
bottom supports

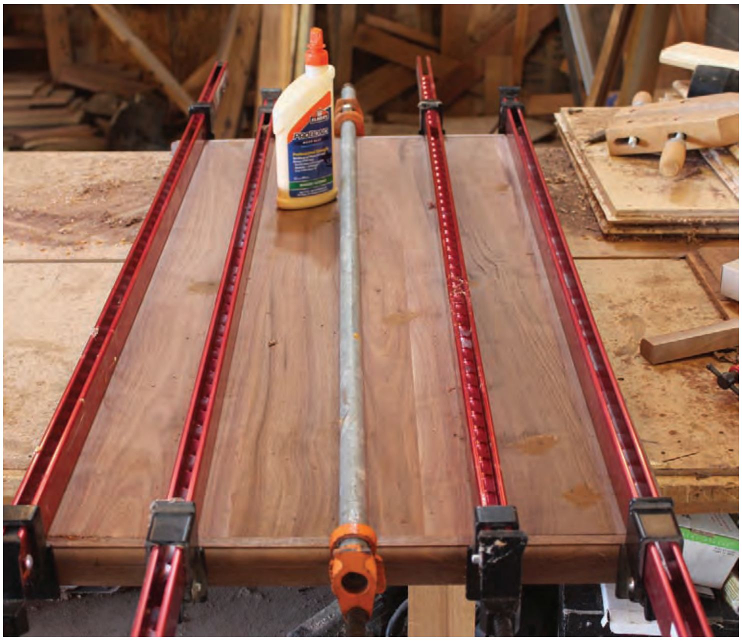


Apron detail, scale of 1” squares



the edge-banding and top joints, remove with a sharp chisel. Sand the top smooth inside and out and finish to suit.

The lid is held in place with Rockler Lid-Stay Torsion Hinges, rated for 30 in-lbs. each. These hinges work as a hinge and lid support all in one. Installation is quick and easy. Now all that's left is to put a big bow on your project and set it under the Christmas tree. **EHT**



Rout and cut the top edge-banding to shape and glue end pieces to the top. Allow to set overnight, and then install the front piece.

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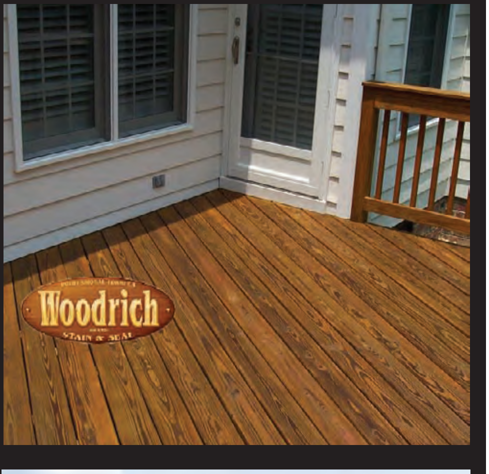

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THE RIGHT FRAME OF MINE

Cutting, Shaping and Joining Your Own Picture Frame

By Matt Weber

During college I had a part-time job chopping wood for a framing shop in Memphis, Tennessee. I made several frames per day, joining the miters with a Cassesse machine. This was a large, table-sized machine driven by an air compressor, on which we'd join the corners by pressing a foot pedal that fired a V-shaped metal fastener into the underside of the miters. These V-shaped wedges provided a good, strong connection for the picture frames, but most folks don't have a Cassesse machine laying around the garage.

Neither do I, but after having assembled countless picture frames, I cringe at the prospect of paying the high cost of a professional framer to do something I can do myself. Maybe I'm stubborn. Maybe I'm cheap. Either way, this article will show how you, too, can be stubborn and cheap by cutting, shaping and joining your own frame from hardwood that's widely available at most home stores. The stock I used for this project was 1X oak lumber that I picked up at my local Lowe's store (www.lowes.com).

Of course, frame shops offer all sorts of picture moulding, from wood to metal to plastic, in countless designs and profiles. You can always purchase these pre-manufactured sticks and go straight to the measuring and mitering. Or, as shown here, you can make moulding from "scratch."

One advantage to making your own picture moulding is that there aren't many rules. You're the artist. You can make the moulding as thin or as thick as you want. If you're

SOUTHERN MISS
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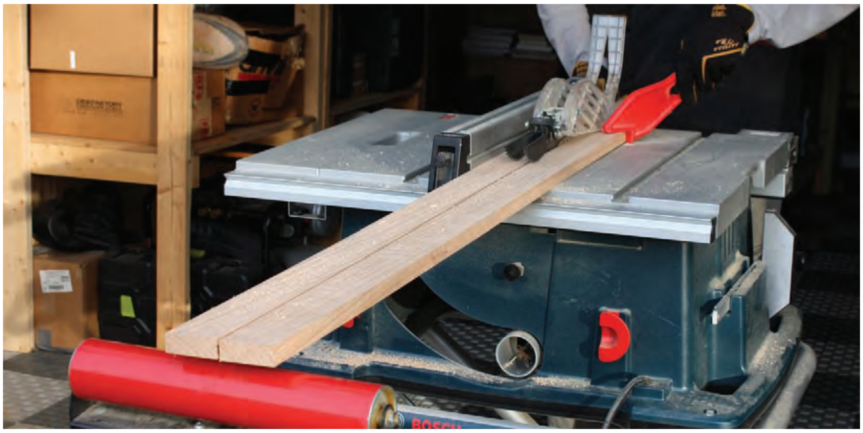
"The Catch"
Daniel A Moore

handy at crafts, you can add detailed carvings, burned wood engravings or faux finishes. You can go crazy with a variety of router bits, or even build up your molding with trim strips of various profiles to create elaborate cornice designs.

I was framing a sports painting—a print by Daniel Moore, an artist who paints University of Alabama football players in moments of game-changing glory. It had been professionally matted by a framing shop and given to me as a gift. Considering the subject matter, I didn't want my moulding frilly or feminine, so I cut it from 1-by-8 oak stock.


Rip the dimensional oak lumber to your desired molding width.

MAKING THE CUT

The 3/4-inch thickness of the oak worked fine for my purpose, but I ripped the boards on my table saw to about 3 inches wide.

The next step is to rout a rabbet along one edge of the 3-inch moulding strips. You can use a free-hand router, but for this type of operation I prefer a router in a router table so the fence can keep the stock stationary. To determine cutting depth, measure the thickness of both the

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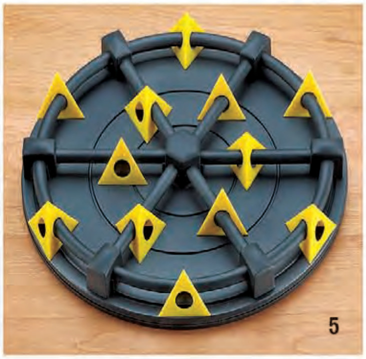
5

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14

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matted picture and the glass that will cover it. Adjust the rabbeting bit to allow both the glass and matted picture to lay into the groove and be recessed—or, at least flush with—the back of the moulding. The rabbeting bit I used has a ball-bearing guide to keep the groove a consistent 1/2-inch wide, which will conceal the edges of the picture mat.

With the backside rabbet complete, I flipped the moulding over to add some detail to the front. First, I ran the outside edge of

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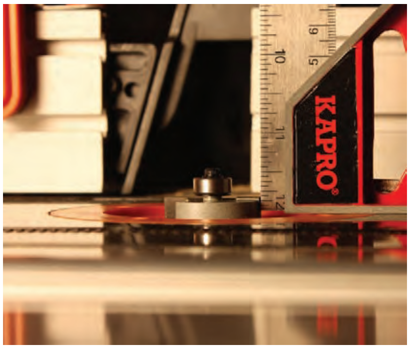
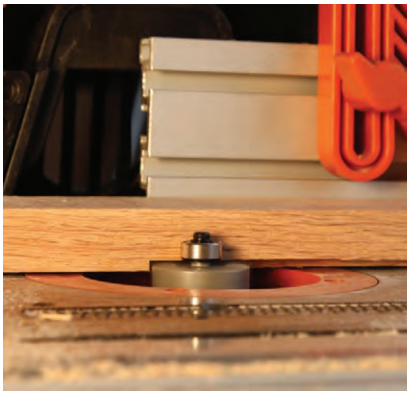
Measure the artwork dimensions carefully, and add 1/8” to each side to allow a little wiggle room within the frame.

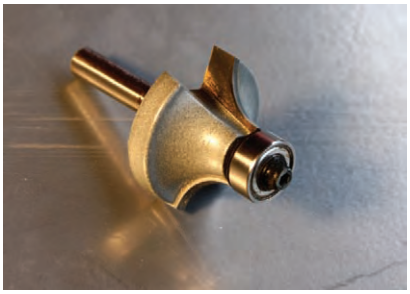


Set the rabbeting bit just deep enough to allow the combined thickness of the artwork and glass.

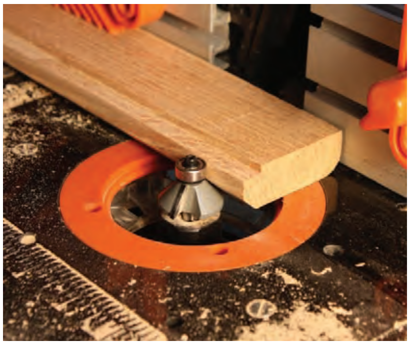


Routing a rabbet in the rear of the frame creates a groove that conceals the edges of the art.

Use any number of router bits to create a profile of your choice.



A round-over bit is shaped to ease the edge of wood stock, which made the edge of the frame less susceptible to nicks and dents.



The chamfer bit gives the inside edge of the molding a bevel cut to add some decorative shadow lines.

the moulding across a round-over bit, which gave it a more graceful (and nick- and dent-resistant) curve. I then ran the opposite side of the moulding over a chamfer bit. The chamfer bit cuts at a 45-degree bevel along the edge to provide some extra shadow lines.

When routing, cut the stock carefully to avoid burn marks that can discolor the grain. The easiest way to do this is to make a few shallow passes over the work with the router bit, working progressively toward your overall desired cutting depth.

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For square frames, all miters are simple 45-degree cuts.

MEASURING, MITERING

I was making a square frame, meaning 45-degree angles. If you're making anything funky, like an octagonal frame, then you'll need to pull out the ol' geometry book and calculate your cuts. You can cut the sticks with a miter box and handsaw, or chop that first 45 with a powered miter saw.

Next, measure the top edge of the picture (and/or matting) to determine the length of the frame. When transferring that measurement to the corresponding length of picture moulding to be cut, it is critical that you calculate the measurement from the outside edge of the rabbet, not the inside point of the miter. This accounts for the length of the recessed groove that will conceal the edges of your picture. If you were to measure your moulding from the shorter corner of the rabbet, then you will cut the moulding too short for the picture.

When transferring the dimensions of the artwork to the molding, make sure to take the measurements from the longest point of the rabbet.

Double-check your measurement before cutting the other

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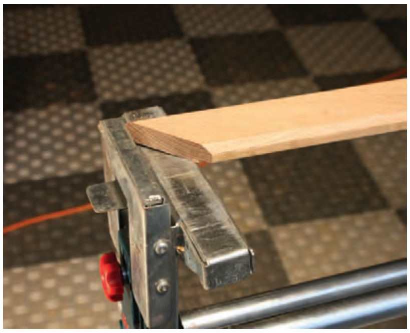
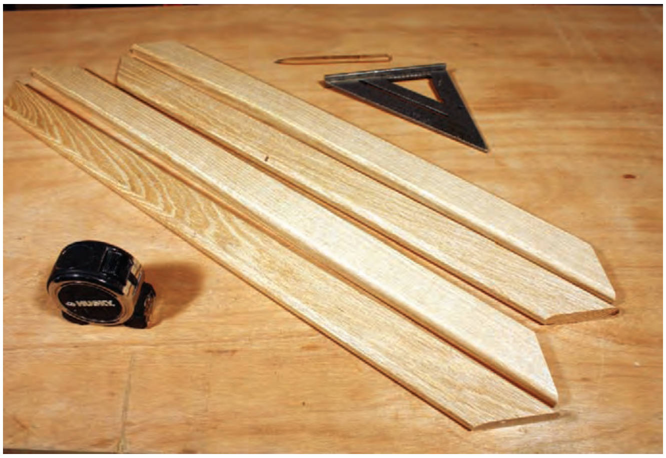
end of the moulding in an opposite 45-degree miter. Then, add about 1/8-inch to the length of each stick, so when positioning the artwork you'll have a little wiggle room to guarantee no binding of the mat. To ensure consistency of cuts, I lock the stops of my miter saw so I'm cutting the next piece—the bottom length of the frame—to the exact same length.


Stops for a miter saw help ensure consistent, matching cuts.


The top and bottom pieces should match exactly, as should the two side pieces.

Be sure the moulding is firmly supported when cutting. Although this flat oak stock was easy to cut, smaller and/or taller profiles can sometimes sit slightly out of square against the fence, or roll a bit beneath the blade, which can lead to an uneven cut at the rear of the miter. Keep the moulding steady and square against the saw base and you'll require less wood filler later.

Repeat this cutting process for the two side pieces of the frame,

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ensuring the measurements match each other exactly and orienting the miters for “inside” corners.

Once the sticks were cut to length, I sanded them smooth and wiped on a mahogany gel stain. I liked the darker tone of the mahogany, plus it still allowed the natural wood grain to show through the stain. I chose a gel stain simply for its ease of use. Gel stains are a cinch to apply by simply wiping them on with a rag. They clean up fairly easily and give the wood a rich look. I used two coats, allowing drying time between each.

Sand the moulding smooth before applying a wood stain.

I used a mahogany-tone gel stain that allowed the oak wood grain to show.

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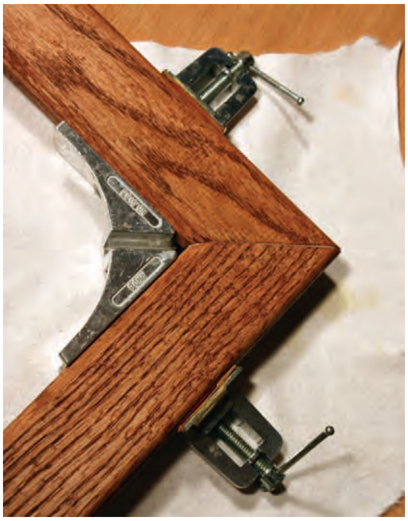
JOINERY

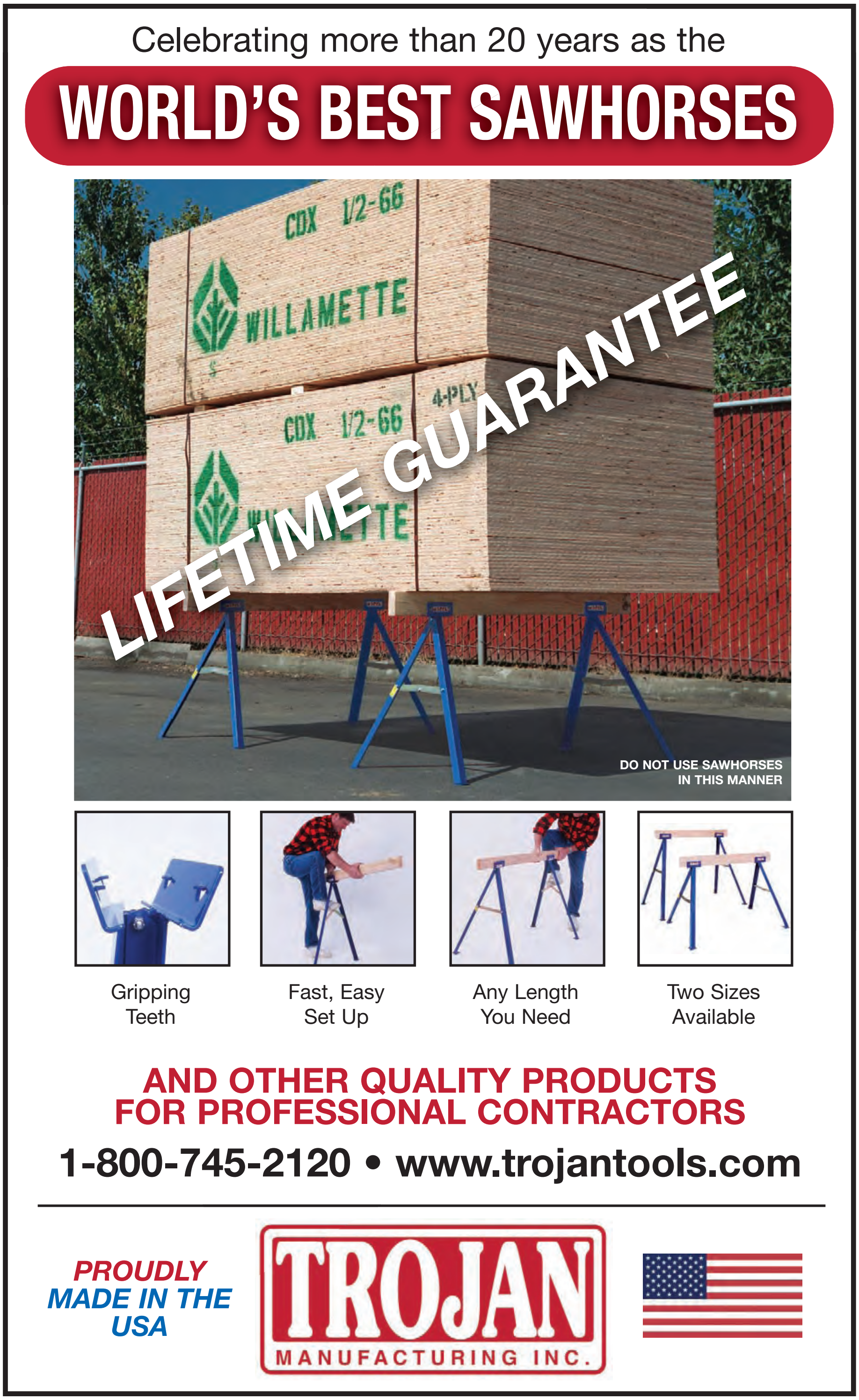
In lieu of the Cassesse machine, I joined my corners with a combination of wood glue and finish nails. You’ll need a large flat working area, such as an uncluttered workbench, as well as some miter clamps for this procedure, particularly if working with long sticks of moulding. Apply a liberal amount of quality wood glue to the face of each miter, join and clamp the pieces tightly with the faces of the moulding completely flush. Use a toothpick to remove any beads of glue that squeeze out of the joint. These particular clamps elevated the moldings about 1/4 inch off the table, so I had to use shims beneath the opposite ends of the sticks to relieve pressure at the miters and prevent the joints from separating.

The fasteners come next. As with any hardwood, begin by pre-drilling the nail holes. I used a Dremel, but any drill will work—in fact, we used a manual hand drill in the dark ages back at the framing shop. Use nails long enough to extend well into the matching piece of stock. I used two different sizes of nails for each corner. The shorter nail joined the outside point of the corner. I used a longer nail as the second fastener to penetrate through the thicker portion of stock and nearly 3/4-inch into the mating piece of moulding. Set the nail heads below the

Connect the miters with a high-quality wood glue.



Miter clamps will hold the joints securely while the wood dries and the nails are driven.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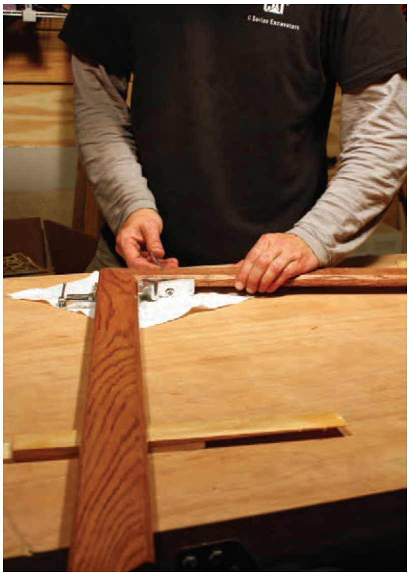
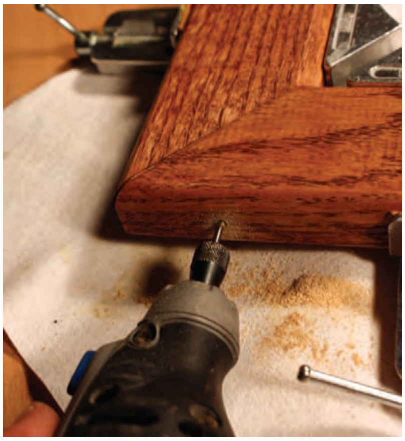
surface of the moulding. Allow the adhesive to dry overnight, and the combination of glue and nails will create a strong joint.

You can join the remaining two corners on the following day. Once the frame is dry, use a stainable or color-matched wood putty to fill nail holes and conceal any gaps at the joints. To add a glossy finish, I used two coats of varnish, allowing each coat to dry overnight and lightly sanding between.



Support the long ends of the moulding sticks with shims to relieve tension on the clamped joints.



Predrill the nail holes to avoid splitting.

FINISHING AND ASSEMBLY

Rather than using actual glass for this picture, I went with Plexiglass for a little extra durability. My local Lowe's cuts the sheets to spec and sells them for a reasonable price. When

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placing the glass and picture in your frame, do so in a fairly dust-free area. For example, the Plexiglass required me to remove thin scratch-resistant film before placing, but its removal created static electricity on the plexi surface that attracted little bits of a fuzz and debris, which I then had to labor to remove so they wouldn't be sealed between the glass and picture. Using compressed air to clear the glass works well, and leaves no streaking like a spray cleaner is apt to do.

If you've cut and routed the moulding correctly, then your glass and frame should lay right in, flush with or recessed within the frame. If you've built your frame too small, I suppose you can always take some scissors

You'll need ample room to work, such as a large table or workbench.

Use finish nails long enough to penetrate substantially into the mating stick of moulding.

Set the nail heads below the wood surface.

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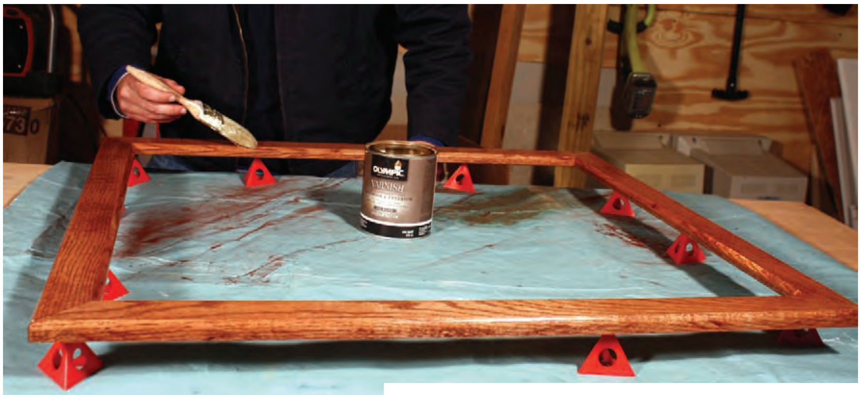
to your artwork. But that's kind of like rearranging the colored stickers on a Rubik's Cube and calling it "solved."

Finishing up, I simply taped the rear of the matting in place to hold its position and then backed the entire frame with foam board sealed along the edges with Gorilla Tape. This isn't the most beautiful back-of-frame treatment—but who looks at the back of a picture? In the old frame shop, we used "framer's points" to secure the mat in the frame (see sidebar, p. 56), and sealed the backs of the frames with construction paper, glued along the perimeter of the frame. Whichever method you choose, the idea is to seal out dust that could potentially work its way between the glass and artwork.



When applying varnish to the frame, Painter's Pyramids elevated the frame for easy access to the edges.

Keep the glass free of dust and debris when installing.

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MIU10003

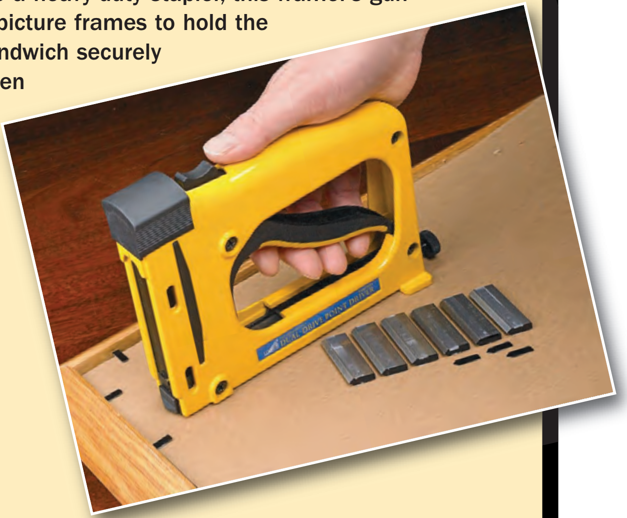
When it comes to picture-hanging hardware, a wire will work fine for smaller pictures, but for larger ones I prefer the extra stability of two predrilled picture hooks mounted to each side of the frame. After that, all that's left is to mount your new showpiece. **EHT**

If you're measurements were correct, the artwork should fit right in. Seal the back of the frame to prevent dust intrusion.

FRAMING TOOLS FOR THE DIY'ER

PICTURE FRAMER'S POINT GUN

A point gun was a staple (pardon the pun) in the frame shop I worked at in college. Functioning like a heavy-duty stapler, this framer's gun drives flexible points into picture frames to hold the glass/artwork/backing sandwich securely in position. Points are driven parallel to the backing into either hardwood or softwood, but leaving a 1/64" space—just enough to hold the sandwich securely without causing damage. Visit www.leevalley.com.



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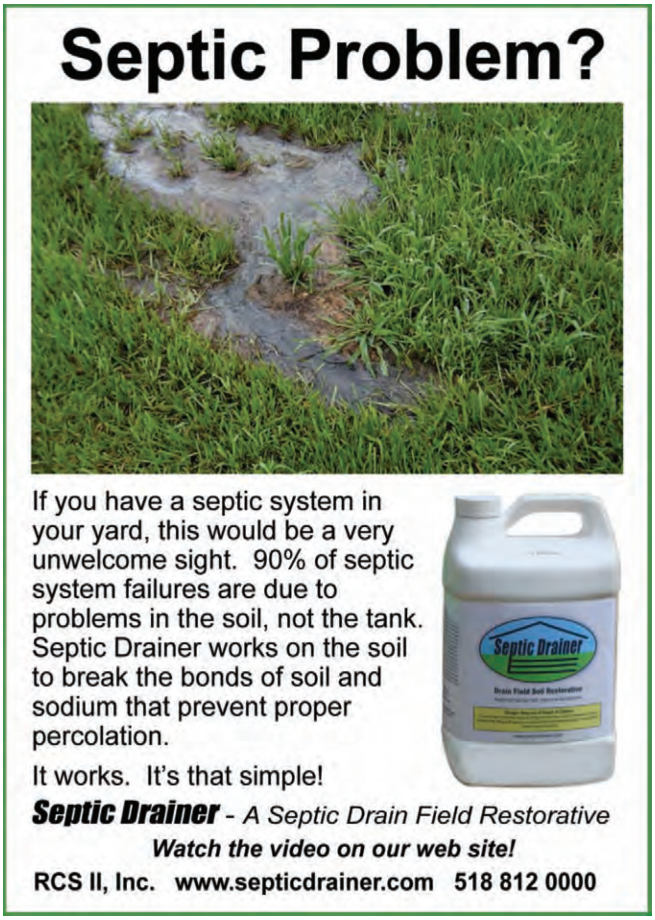
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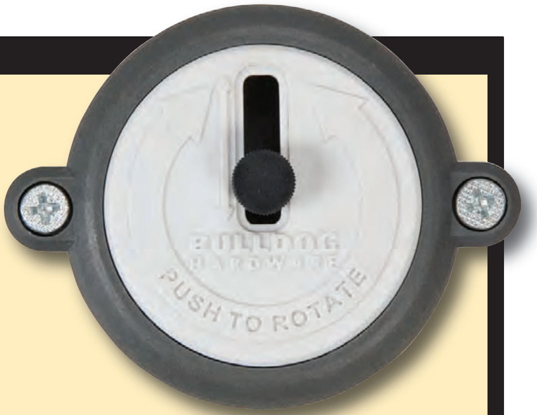
GRACE

FRAMING TOOLS FOR THE DIY'ER



ADJUSTABLE PICTURE HANGER

Just like the name says, the new Adjustable Picture Hanger from Bulldog Hardware allows you to adjust a picture after you hang it. Featuring a rotating dial-and-button system, it's perfect for hanging groups of pictures that require perfect alignment, allowing adjustments up and down, left and right. Visit www.easypicturehanging.com.

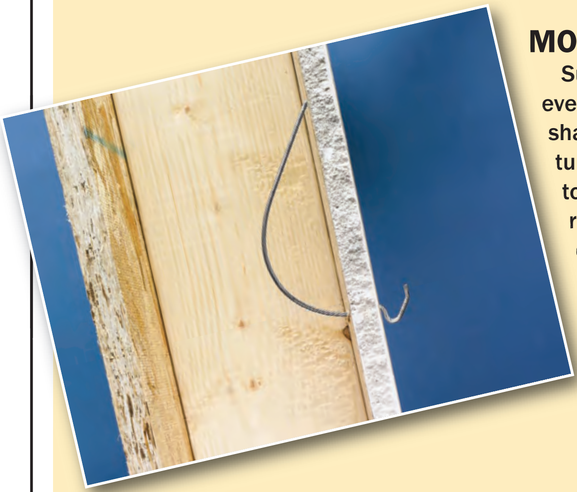
TAPER GAUGE

VERITAS 4-WAY SPEED CLAMP

Billed as the fastest-adjusting frame clamp on the market, the 4-Way Speed Clamp is completely knurled for good grip, and the speed-clamping nuts are designed to let you make fast adjustments, yet hold securely when tightened. They slide easily on the rods until they meet a corner clamp; then their threads engage. To release them, just back them off a turn or two and they are then free-sliding again. The Speed Clamp includes four corners, four speed-clamping nuts and four 1/4-20 threaded rods that will clamp up to 23" square. To increase clamping capacity to 44" square, or 65" by 23" rectangle, an extension set is available. Visit www.leevalley.com.

REUSABLE PICTURE LEVEL

One problem that arises when using most levels to hang a picture is the need for two hands to adjust the picture and a third to hold the level in place. For those of us with only two hands, there's the Reusable Picture Level from Bulldog Hardware. It grips the frame, freeing one your hands, and includes hooks that hold up to 30 pounds. When finished, store it and reuse for future projects. Visit. www.easypicturehanging.com.



MONKEY HOOK

Super simple for hanging pictures in drywall, the Monkey Hook does not even require a hammer for installation. Simply puncture the wall with the sharp point of the wire and slide in the hook until it latches. Hang the picture, and the weight on the hook flexes the spring tail, providing tension to keep the hook firmly in place. Made of high-carbon spring steel, it is reusable and leaves a small, tidy hole that is easily concealed with a dab of compound. The regular hook holds a 50-pound maximum load, while the heavy-gauge hook supports up to 75. Visit www.leevalley.com.

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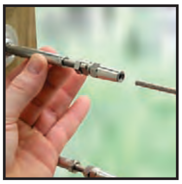
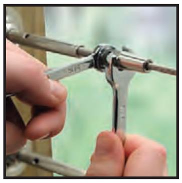
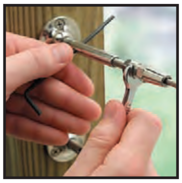


Step 1
Fully seat wire rope.



Step 2
Tighten cone onto receiver



Step 3
Rotate body to tension wire rope.

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WINTER WISE

Preparing your automobile for the storms ahead.

By Larry Walton

In the olden days, getting ready for winter meant chopping enough firewood to cook and heat the house, and moving livestock from elevated pastures closer to home. Nowadays it's quite a bit different. For many of us, digging out a winter jacket, changing seasonal sports gear and getting our cars ready to run easily and efficiently in frigid temperatures is about all that's needed to survive the cold season.

Winter can be tough on a vehicle. Traction, visibility and daylight hours are all limited, but there seems to be no limit to rain, fog and snow. Tire pressures drop, oil gets thick, salt accumulates and roads get slippery. We need our wipers to wipe, our lights to light and our anti-freeze not to freeze.

All of the regular maintenance procedures apply for winter, and in some areas they are more important because a mechanical breakdown can be dangerous when the temperatures really get low.

Therefore, make sure that your oil changes, tire pressures, air filter, fuel filter and coolant levels are current. Depending on your mileage, you may be due for some of the longer term items such as injectors, plugs, igniters, shocks, transmission service and whatever else your owner's manual says.

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Snow tires make a big difference. Softer compounds, extensive siping and self-cleaning tread patterns all add up to extra traction.

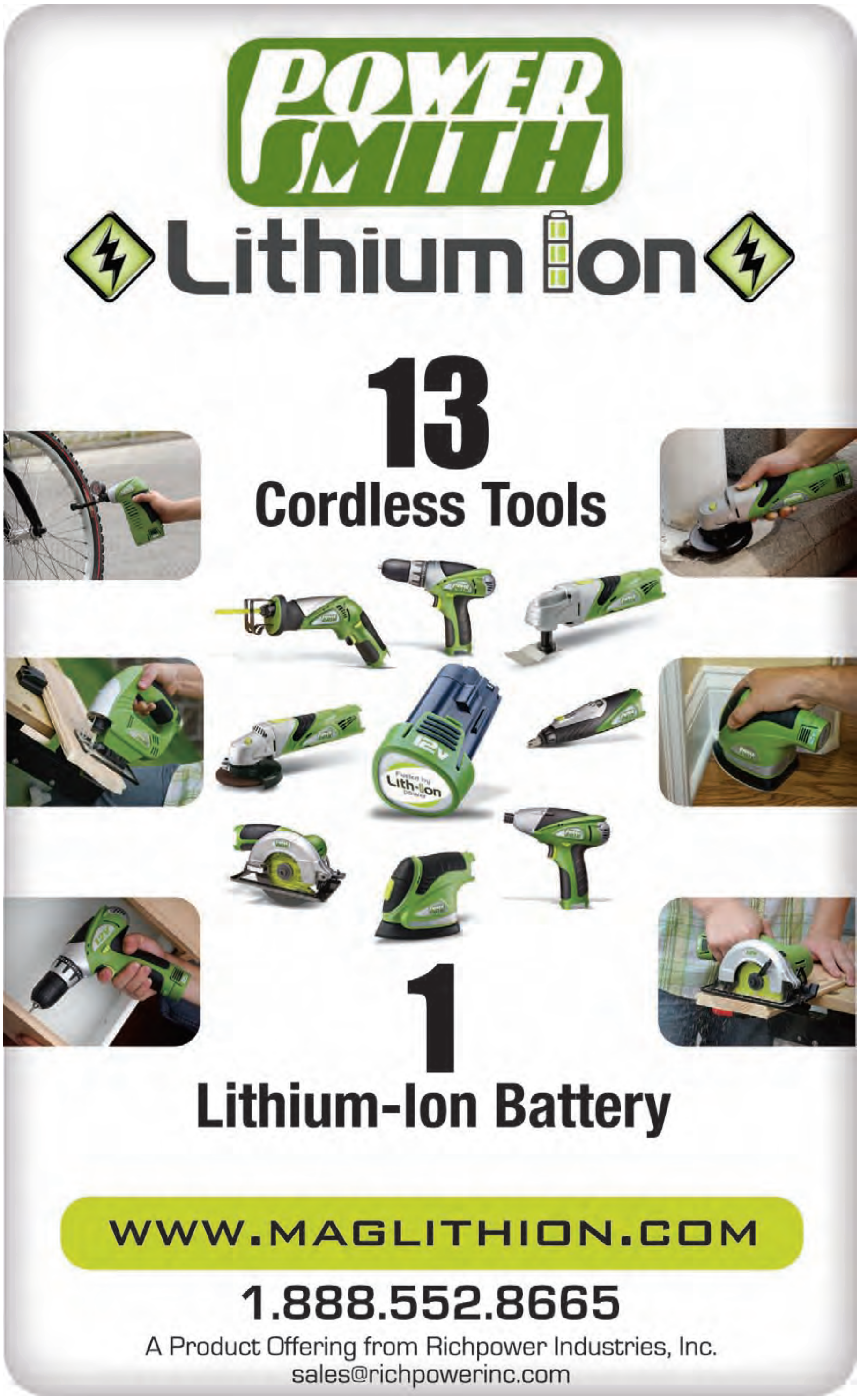
TRACTION

Lower temperatures drop air pressure readings at a time when tire condition and traction are critical. In addition to making sure pressures and tread depths are in spec, consider switching to a true winter tire.

Yuppers, NoDakers, Mainers and other dwellers of the north will be sporting their studded tires for the season. Snow boarders and ski bums alike will often go with the spiked treads as well. Studless snow tires are another option. Bridgestone Blizzak, Goodyear Ultra Grip Ice, Michelin X-Ice Xi2, Nokian Hakkapilitta RHi, and Continental ExtremeContact are examples of these tires, which work well especially for those

Applying Rain-X is a wax-on/wax-off type of operation. The window treatment also aids in removing ice, mud and bugs.

Easy to install, Rain-X Latitude wiper blades feature a curved-style blade, graphite coated rubber blades, built-in spoiler to reduce wind lift, and no exposed metal to prevent ice buildup.



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who only occasionally see snow and ice. These DOT-approved snow tires are made of softer tread compounds and have lots of siping for added grip in ice and snow. Studless tires are better on dry pavement and are easier on the road surface compared to studs.

Those who occasionally see snow and ice conditions can opt to carry tire chains in their vehicles. Some retailers who sell chains will take them back for a refund if they are unused. Chains can be very effective traction devices when used properly. Make sure you are in a safe location when installing chains. You are chaining up because conditions have gotten pretty challenging. Other drivers may not have control of their vehicles, which makes it dangerous for those installing chains at roadside.

Do not attempt to use chains that are off the fitting chart for your tire. Follow installation and use instructions carefully. Throwing a chain can cause both auto body and drivetrain damage. Pay attention to speed cautions and give attention to the safety check intervals to make sure everything is operating properly.

My truck has an aFe intake, which improves horsepower and fuel efficiency. It also has the added advantage of being cleanable. Summer use gets an air filter dirty, so part of my winter prep is cleaning the filter.

Rainy conditions also require appropriate tread designs. Don't assume that your car has all-season tires. In fact, if you drive a performance oriented car with sport tuned suspensions and low-profile tires, it probably came

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stock with summer tires. When I checked the tires on my wife's turbo-charged WRX I found this to be the case so I ordered a set of Goodyear Eagle F1s.

Four-wheel drive also enhances traction and is great to have for most winter road conditions. Make sure all the drivers in the family understand the operation of the transfer case, hubs and switches. Provide the proper cautions about diff lockers if your rig is so equipped. Test your four-wheel drive system ahead of time especially if it's rarely used. Remember, four-wheel drive isn't a magic get-out-of-trouble device. Braking and handling remain mostly unchanged in 4x4, so don't get too cocky.

Thoroughly wash the filter with soap and water. Dish soap works well to cut the oil in the filter treatment products.

Rinse the filter with clean water.

Set the filter in the sun to dry out.

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The air filter improves filtration by trapping small dust particles.

Make sure the filter oil is getting into the folds of the filter ribs. Start at the seam, and rotate the filter until you get back to the seam again.

GETTING STARTED

Batteries need more attention in winter. They don't like temperature extremes. When cold, they can produce less power at the very time when the engine is harder to start. Diesels are particularly hard to start when cold. So make sure your battery is in good shape before winter sets in.

Also hard to start is any vehicle with a cracked block from frozen coolant. Check and/or change the engine coolant in your vehicle to make sure it has the proper antifreeze levels.

One of the reasons engines start harder in cold temperatures is because oil gets thicker when temperature drops. You can counteract this tendency by using oil with lower viscosity grade numbers. Check your owner's manual for the proper range to match the temperatures.

Diesel owners may want to consider switching to a synthetic motor oil such as Rotella T, which improves cold-weather performance while providing excellent high-temperature wear protection. Exceptional cold-weather flow properties really help with cold starts on diesel engines.

WINTER EYES

Wiper blades have about a one-year life expectancy. UV exposure, being frozen to the windshield, and wiping off mud splatters all speed the degradation of the blades. Aftermarket frame-and-blade designs make for a quick and easy install. Rain-X Latitude, for example, can easily be installed on wiper arms with

J-hook, side pins, bayonet or pin-and-holder connectors.

Don't forget the wiper fluid, which needs to be temperature rated to levels you expect to encounter in your travels.

Seeing and being seen is greatly improved through the addition of auxiliary lights. We not only face rain and fog, but the nights are longer, requiring us to drive more hours in the dark. Adding driving lights and fog lights to your vehicle can make a big difference to improve vision, reaction times and stopping distance.

Check your owner's manual for a section on winter driving. Above all, be prepared. **EHT**

A few teaspoons of baking soda in a spray bottle of water makes a good battery cleaning solution.

After spraying the corroded areas, use a toothbrush to scrub the affected areas. Rinse with water.

ALTUS
% CHARGE
VOLTS

It's a good idea to test the battery for output. A battery nearing the end of its lifespan can leave you stranded in winter conditions.

If the battery starts showing signs of fatigue, replace the battery.

MORE WINTER TIPS

WINTER SURVIVAL KIT

During the winter months your vehicle's emergency kit should include a first-aid kit, water, food, flashlight, window scraper, tire chains, bag of sand, flares, small shovel, jumper cables and blankets.

PLUGGED IN

If your diesel vehicle is equipped with a block heater, use it. It will start easier, run better, and the heater/defroster will work right away. To save energy, Dan Judy Automotive in Salem, Oregon, recommends buying a 30-amp, commercial-grade timer and setting it to come on about two hours before you plan to start your truck.

WHEEL DEAL

When you get serious about changing tires for winter conditions it may work best for you to get a second set of wheels for your snow tires. If your vehicle is a model that is often modified by owners with aftermarket wheels, the stock wheels that fit your rig can often be found on Craigslist or local trader publications.

16 Top Tips for Winterizing the Home

By Monte Burch

With the beginning of fall weather comes that much dreaded annual chore—winterizing your home. Many of these chores are ignored, but a little time spent before the football season can be extremely important, not only in conserving fuel and money, but in effectively maintaining a comfortable and safe environment. Following are some tips that can help regardless of where you live. You might want to keep this sheet and check off the chores as you do them.

1.

Have an HVAC professional inspect and make sure the furnace is working properly. If your furnace has old-fashioned sheet metal ductwork, replace with insulated ducts, including the plenum. Clean out all ducts and clean the registers, checking to make sure they work properly. Replace furnace filters, changing them once a month or more if needed. If you have an older thermostat you can often save money by installing a new programmable thermostat. If you use propane, make sure the tank is filled.

2.

Check all doors and windows for cracks, openings, cracked or loose window panes. Replace old inefficient windows, or replace old storm windows with newer, more energy-efficient models. Caulk and weather strip to seal off all openings. Switch summer screens with storms.

3.

Repair and winterize lawn and garden tools. If you have major small engine or lawnmower problems, have them fixed now rather than waiting for spring when all repair shops are busy. Sharpen or replace lawnmower blades. Drain the oil and replace along with the filter. Do any minor repairs. Again it's often quicker and easier to get parts during the off season. Replace line in string trimmers ready for spring. Drain gas from lawnmowers, or add a fuel additive to all engines. Make sure the snow blower is working properly. Clean and sharpen all gardening equipment such as rakes, hoes, shovels, shears and so forth. Give wooden handles a coating of linseed oil.

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4.

Inspect the roof and replace any worn or damaged shingles. Inspect flashing and replace or reseal any problem areas.

5.

Clean and inspect the gutters, make sure all downspouts are working. You may wish to add leaf guards to the guttering.

6.

Inspect the exterior of the house for cracked, broken or loose siding. Replace or repair, again to keep out pests as well as to protect the construction from moisture. If residing, add a house wrap for even more protection.

7.

Add or replace old insulation in attics, install under-floor insulation in crawl spaces. Use foam insulation to further insulate basements, uninsulated garage doors and other areas.

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8.

Have a professional chimney sweep inspect, clean and repair any fireplaces, flues or wood stoves. Add chimney or flue caps to keep out birds and pests. Tuck-point or repair any loose masonry. Make sure dampers work on fireplaces and stoves. Lay in a winter's supply of firewood and kindling and cover it for protection. Do not store firewood against or inside your house. Install or replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Check to make sure fire extinguishers are working and replace any older than 10 years.

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9.

Inspect plumbing and maintain or repair to prevent plumbing freezes. Insulate all exposed pipes, including those in unheated crawl spaces. Install pipe insulation on water heaters. Trailers and houses with open undersides should be well insulated with skirting. Check exterior drain-back faucets and make sure they work properly. Drain all garden hoses, and store inside a garage or garden shed. Drain air-conditioner pipes and shut off the AC if it has a shut-off valve. Remove window air conditioners or cover them with the appropriate covers. Drain pool plumbing and winterize the pool.

10.

Winterize your landscape by removing any bulbs that won't overwinter. Plant spring-blooming bulbs. Clean out all old annual flower beds. Remove all old vegetation from the garden and dispose or place in a compost bin. Rake all lawn leaves and add to the compost pile. Prune trees and shrubs that may be injured during the winter.

11. Inspect the basement or foundation and seal off any pipe or other openings with foam sealant. Install covers over crawlspace ventilation openings. Cover basement windows with plastic shields. Rake leaves and debris away from the foundation. Tuck-point or seal foundation cracks and other openings to keep out mice and other pests. Inspect the sill plate and joists for signs of dry rot or other damage.

12. Inspect to make sure tree limbs do not overhang or are too close to the house, or are overhanging power lines. Trim or have a professional trim any that may be a problem in ice or other winter storms.

13. Inspect and repair or recoat decks. Repair patios.

14. Clean and store deck and lawn furniture and cushions. Take down or remove flower pots, clean and store. Bring plants inside that you wish to overwinter.

15. Check automobile antifreeze and add as needed. Make up a winter travel kit including blankets, bottled water, spare clothing, snack foods, tools for roadside repairs, flares and anything specific to your area.

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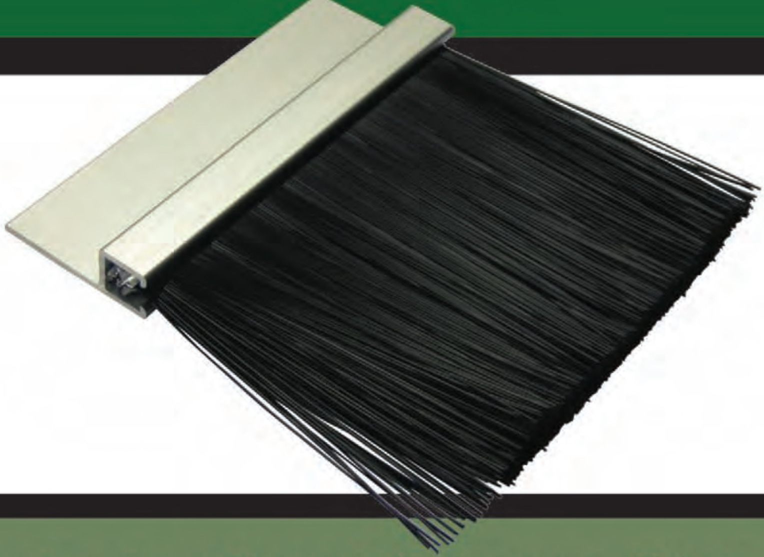

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16.

If you don't already have a home winter-emergency kit, make one up and store it in a readily accessible area. It should contain bottled water, canned or non-perishable foods (along with can opener), flashlights with spare batteries, fire extinguishers, candles, matches, a well supplied first-aid kit, and a weather radio that operates on a battery and is kept charged. Propane stoves and lanterns can also be a great help when the electricity goes out, but remember proper ventilation. Battery powered camp lanterns can also be used, as well as your grandmother's oil lamp. If you already have an emergency kit, check all and replace as needed. **EHT**

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To Rot or Not

Replacing Rotted Wood with Synthetic Trim

By Matt Weber

Exterior wood trim is often a candidate for rot, especially if it's not properly sealed and maintained. Window sills and door casings provide an area for water to accumulate and work its black magic on the wood fibers. Long ago hardwoods were used for exterior trim, which would last for decades if painted and maintained. These days, the widely available softwood trims can show signs of rot within 5 years.

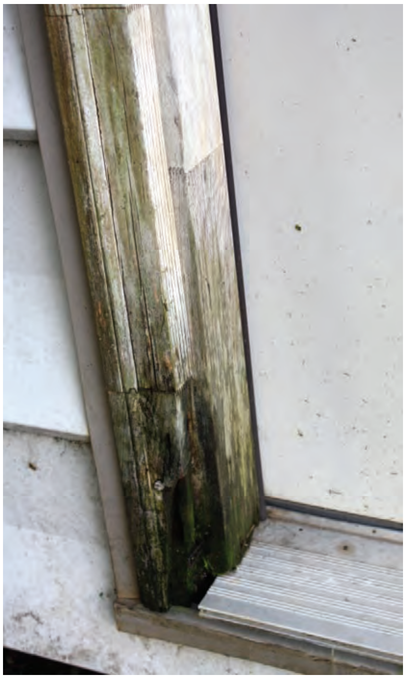
Plastics do not rot. So, it only made sense when addressing some recent rot problems that I replace the damaged wood with PVC or urethane—two materials that hold up to water. Replacing the trim with plastic rather than wood, and properly sealing the surrounding area, ensured that I wouldn't be repairing the same problem in just a few years.

THE BRICK MOULD HAS MOLDED

The wood trim surrounding my workshop door was in especially bad shape. Over the years, the brick mould and door casing had turned shades of gray, black and green, indicating mold, mildew and rot. With a little nudge from a pry bar, the wood pulled away in soft, damp chunks with no structural integrity to speak of. Not good.

My first move was to remove the problem area. The brick mould replacement was fairly straightforward. I simply pried away the old trim to replace it with urethane brick mould of the same size and profile. The urethane brick mould is manufactured by Fypon (www.fypon.com), a company that offers a wide variety of synthetic trim materials that stand up to the outdoor elements.

The door casing repair was more complicated. I didn't need to replace the entire door, but its prehung casing was just as rotted near the bottom of the door as the brick mould. So, I surgically cut out the offending area much like I imagine a doctor removes a tumor—carefully. I used a mini circular saw to cut out a lower chunk of the rotted



The wooden door casing and brick mould showed severe rot.

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WOODCRAFT® Helping You Make Wood Work® | Sears | Hartville Tool Woodworking | amazon.com | MENARDS® | Wood Working Shows | Woodworker's Supply Since 1972 | EAGLE AMERICA casing on each side of the door. I was careful to steer clear of the weather-stripping and not compromise the integrity of the door frame. A wood chisel helped me carve out the edges and corners.

To replace the casing, I modified some 3/4-inch thick solid PVC boards, also available from Fypon. The cool thing about this PVC stock is that it is just as workable as wood—it cuts, routs and mills just as easily. The PVC stock wasn't quite as thick as the casing I had removed, so I face-nailed two pieces of PVC together to match the thickness. One of the pieces had to be ripped thinner on my table saw to achieve the right thickness when coupled with the mating piece. I glued and nailed these two pieces together and clamped them while the adhesive set. By cutting them to width and length and gluing them up, I was fabricating an exact replacement "chunk" of casing to replace the cut-out section.

Once dry, I glued and nailed the piece back into the door surround. For this project I was using King Kaulk (www.reddevil.com), which doubles as both an adhesive and a waterproof sealant—exactly what I need to glue my materials and seal the water outside the door frame. Plus, it's paintable.

The wood pried off easily.

I completely removed the rotted wood.

WOOD WILL WORK IF DONE RIGHT

Most exterior wood trim products are made of white or yellow pine. These types of wood will naturally absorb water, so if the trim is improperly installed then it will be susceptible to rot in just a few a years. The smart way to install wood trim is to apply a primer coat and a top coat of paint to the entire trim piece prior to installation, including the back, each side and the ends. Be sure to paint the finger joints of wood moulding, which are a prime entry point for moisture. Priming and painting helps to seal out water intrusion. Depending on the application, metal flashing may be necessary to prevent contact between surrounding materials, such as brick or stucco, which is porous and absorbs water. Flashing also diverts water away from the building envelope. Thoroughly caulk and seal all joints, fastener holes, and contact points with siding, brick or flashing.

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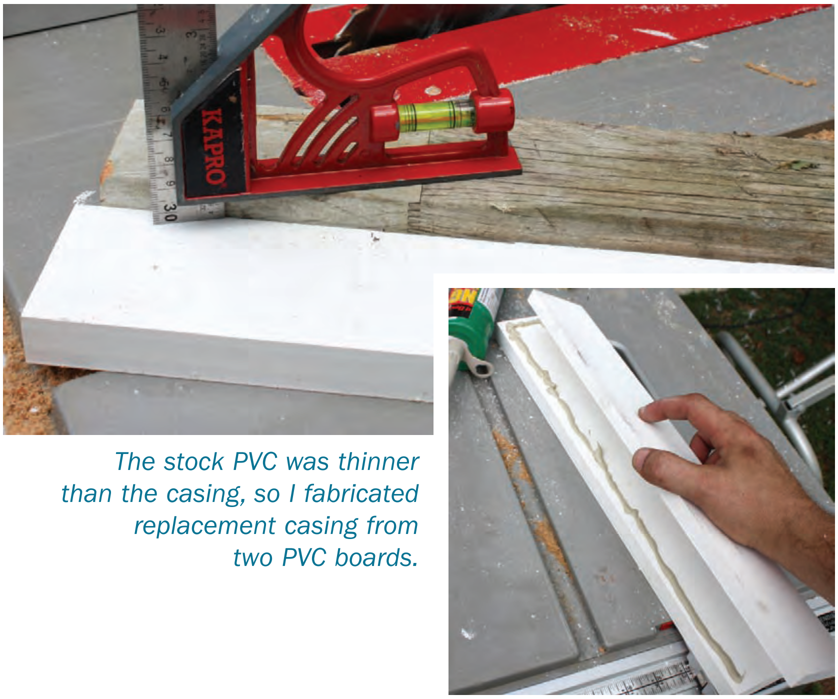
I replaced the lower casing on each side of the door. Once complete, I was ready to knock out the brick mould replacement. This was a simple measure-and-replace operation, and I cut the 45-degree mitered corners on my miter saw. When installing, Fypon recommends applying adhesive to the inside face of the mating corners. I also ran a thick bead of King Kaulk completely around the entire perimeter of the door to secure the brick mould and divert any water. I tacked the trim in place with an air nailer to hold everything tight while the adhesive set. Once all the trim was replaced, I hit all the surrounding seams and joints with a quality, paintable sealant and filled nail holes with plastic wood filler.



The stock PVC was thinner than the casing, so I fabricated replacement casing from two PVC boards.

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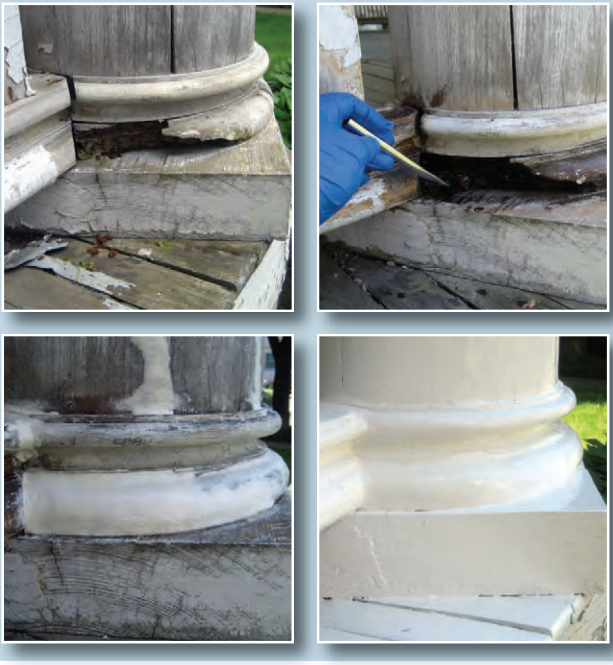
THE LIQUID REPAIR FOR WOOD ROT

In some cases of wood rot, it may not be necessary to completely replace the trim to repair the problem. And, sometimes wood rot occurs in parts that cannot be replaced because of size, shape, availability or artistic reasons. In these circumstances, another approach to solve rot problems comes in the form of chemical-based repair products. Two products from Abatron, LiquidWood and WoodEpox, can repair damaged wood in just a few easy steps. They give new life to severely damaged windows, columns, frames, decorative trim and broken furniture.

LiquidWood reinforces, rebuilds and waterproofs wood by hardening after it penetrates the wood fibers. It's an ideal repair product for rotting sills, frames and floors, and it serves as a primer for the WoodEpox.

WoodEpox is a shrink-free adhesive putty compound that can be used in any thickness in structural and decorative applications to replace, repair, extend or fill wood or other materials. To use, simply clean the wood surface, and brush or pour on the LiquidWood. After the wood hardens, apply and shape the WoodEpox putty to rebuild missing pieces and fill holes. When hard, it can be sanded, stained, painted and nailed. Learn more at www.abatron.com.



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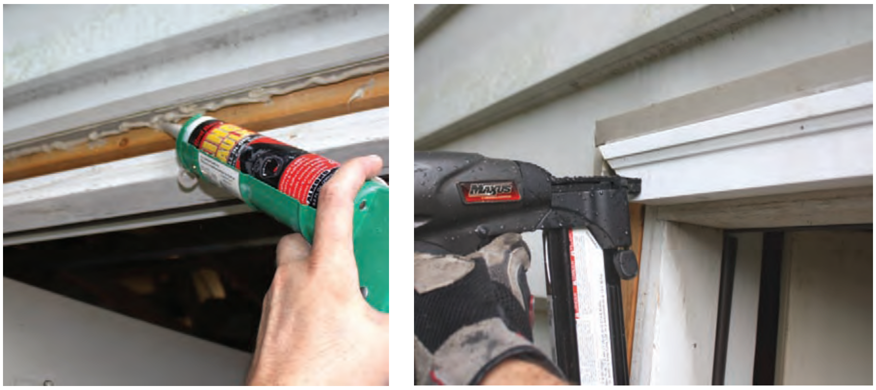
When everything was dry, I sanded away any excess filler, threw on a coat of primer/sealer, and followed that with a couple of coats of exterior paint.

And, that did the trick. The power of plastics withstands the rotting power of water, and the door is now back in action with a fresh look and a much longer life expectancy. **EHT**



Use exterior adhesive and add flashing if necessary. The brick mould was glued and nailed in place

The replacement casing was glued and nailed in place.

The wood brick mould was replaced with urethane brick mould.

Fill the nail holes and caulk seams for a watertight seal.

THE POWER OF PLASTICS

High-density polyurethane is the most popular solid-plastic material used for decorative exterior trim, thanks to its strength and easy workability. The strength of solid-plastic trim is determined by its material density, and the products vary. Typically, the higher the density, the higher the cost, but the high-density products offer more dimensional stability, strength and dent-resistance. Manufacturers of urethane products offer both interior and exterior trim, including entrance trim, window trim, louvers and eave vents, balustrade systems and other decorative millwork.

Another plastic trim material is PVC, which is formed into boards and profiles. The PVC can be routed and shaped with its integral white color consistent throughout the material. PVC trim is less expensive than polyurethane but its surface often requires sanding and painting, whereas urethane trim is usually sold primed and ready to paint or stain. Learn more at www.fypon.com.

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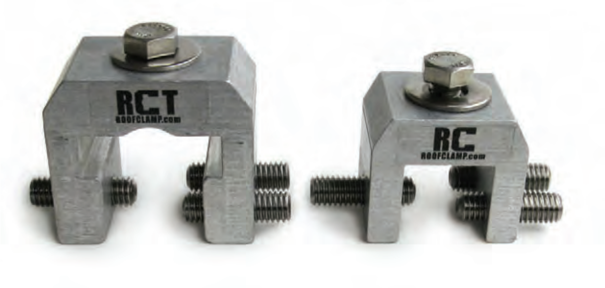
While a standing seam metal roof has exceptional decorative appeal, this type of roofing does pose some challenges, including how to install roofing components such as satellite dishes, HVAC equipment, pipes/conduit or photovoltaic solar modules. In response, the RoofClamp, designed by Action Manufacturing, LLC, is stronger, easier to install and more cost effective than the current solution on the market. The RoofClamp RC works on most snap-lock and seamed roofs, while the RoofClamp RCT works on bulb-shaped and T-shaped panels. The clamps are made of durable 6061-T6 aluminum and incorporate three cupped-nose set screws that clamp onto the standing seam metal roof. Instead of using one or two round-point screws that could slip off the panel, the aluminum RoofClamp utilizes three rounded 1-1/4-by-3/8-inch stainless steel cupped-nose set screws that do not pierce the panel and will not void the panel manufacturer's warranty. A beefy 3/8-inch screw on the top of the clamp attaches the roofing accessories. Learn more at www.RoofClamp.com.



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The patented EZ Leaf Hauler is described as a "giant dustpan for leaves" to make fall and winter yard cleanups a breeze. With enough capacity to hold up to five wheelbarrows of yard debris, the EZ Leaf Hauler is durable, cost effective, and easy to use and store. The EZ Leaf Hauler uses tent construction technology to form sides and a back, and has reinforced pockets and stitched handles for easy hauling and dumping. Stakes are conveniently attached and can be pressed into the ground without tools to hold the tarp in place on windy days. When not in use, the EZ Leaf Hauler folds up easily, requiring only inches of storage space. Learn more at www.ezleafhauler.com.

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Milwaukee Electric Tool introduces two new scraper blades and a grout-removal tool for reciprocating saws. Available in both 1-1/2- and 3-inch sizes, these new scraper blades offer a great solution for removing materials such as linoleum flooring, strong adhesives, paint, glue, thin-set, drywall mud and rust. Likewise, the carbide grit grout-removal tool does an excellent job removing grout from joints 1/8 to 3/4 inch wide. Features of the new scraper blades include induction-hardened edges for maximum durability, a corrosion-resistant coating for longer life, and chamfered corners for greater control. The grout-removal tool features a curved cutting edge for maximum accuracy, coarse carbide grit for fast grout removal and a corrosion-resistant coating. Learn more at www.milwaukeetool.com.

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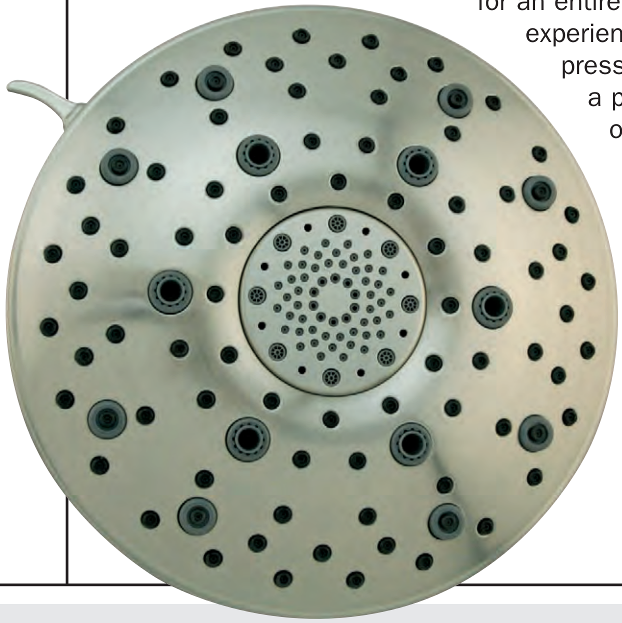

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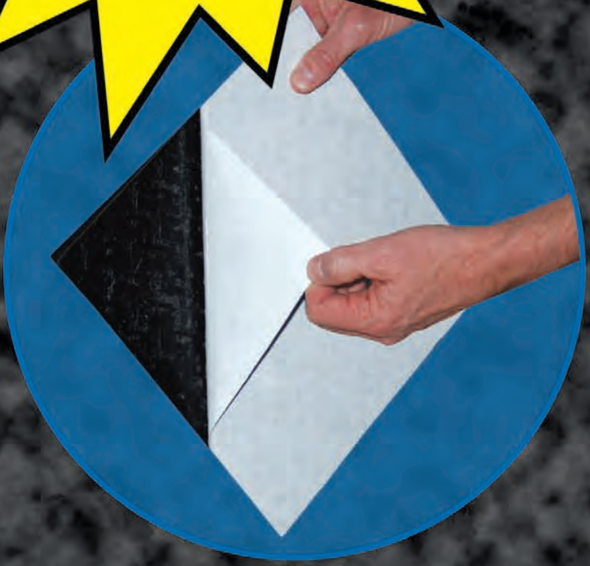

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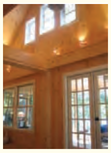
Shelter-Kit has been designing and producing kit buildings for assembly by owners with no prior building experience since 1970. Our product line includes ourGreen Home Kit, the Unit One cabins, the modular, expandable Lofthouse, the Barn/Garage kit and our 1 1/2 or 2-story Barn-House kit. We will work with you on designing your building, we will help you obtain a building permit, we will arrange shipping anywhere, and we will be available to answer your questions before, during, and after construction. We consider every order to be a special, custom order and we will work with you accordingly.

Our cabin, home, barn and garage kits include all the materials to build a complete, weather tight shell, including the frame, siding, sheathing, hardware, roofing and sub floors. Our kits are precut and predrilled, making them easy to assemble, in 3 to 15 days for most models. All materials are selected for quality and ease of assembly and fit, with the weight of each piece limited to what two individuals can handle.

All of the terms in the instructions are easily understandable by amateurs. Each building comes with a detailed Construction Manual. The manual includes drawings and step-by-step instructions, specifically created for each customer's kit. Each of our kits can be customized to meet your individual requirements. We offer many options for building size, windows and doors, stairs, dormers, ceiling heights, cathedral ceilings, etc. We will be glad to work with you to meet your specific requirements.



We ship our kits to all 50 states, Canada and internationally. Canadian sales are duty free.

We encourage you to contact us to discuss your project.

www.shelter-kit.com

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